

THE ARCHITECTS NEWSPAPER

13_07.29.2009

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COURTESY ESDC

NEW MIDDLE-CLASS COMMUNITY AT HUNTER'S POINT SOUTH TO BE CROWNED WITH EXPANSIVE PARK

A Park Fit for Queens

Hunter's Point South has been celebrated by the Bloomberg administration as one of the largest affordable housing complexes ever built in the five boroughs, a haven for middle-class families where 60 percent of the 6,000 units will be preserved for the hard-working teachers, firefighters, and paralegals of the city. Now it stands as well

to become a symbol of the city's determination to transform its once moribund waterfront.

On June 25, a new 11-acre park, designed by Thomas Balsley Associates and Weiss/Manfredi with Arup in charge of engineering and project management, was unveiled by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg at a press

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COURTESY DLANDSTUDIO

UP A CREEK

For 150 years, industrial waste—cement, oil, mercury, lead, PCBs, coal tar, ink—has been dumped into the Gowanus Canal, making it one of the most toxic soups in the city. But why should that stop anyone from revisioning it as a charming neighborhood park?

Formerly a wetland creek bordered by industrial buildings and surrounded by residential

neighborhoods, the Gowanus Canal, a busy transportation hub turned derelict backwater, has recently caught the eye of the mayor, local politicians, and developers putting pressure on the community to address the need for a major cleanup. Currently two plans are in the offing. The Environmental Protection Agency would like to declare the

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ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT?
LOOKING AT FOUR POST-BOOM NEIGHBORHOODS FOR SIGNS OF LIFE. PAGES 23-31

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AT DEADLINE
MARKETPLACE
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GSA TAPS ARCHITECTURE ADVISER TO LEAD DESIGN EXCELLENCE

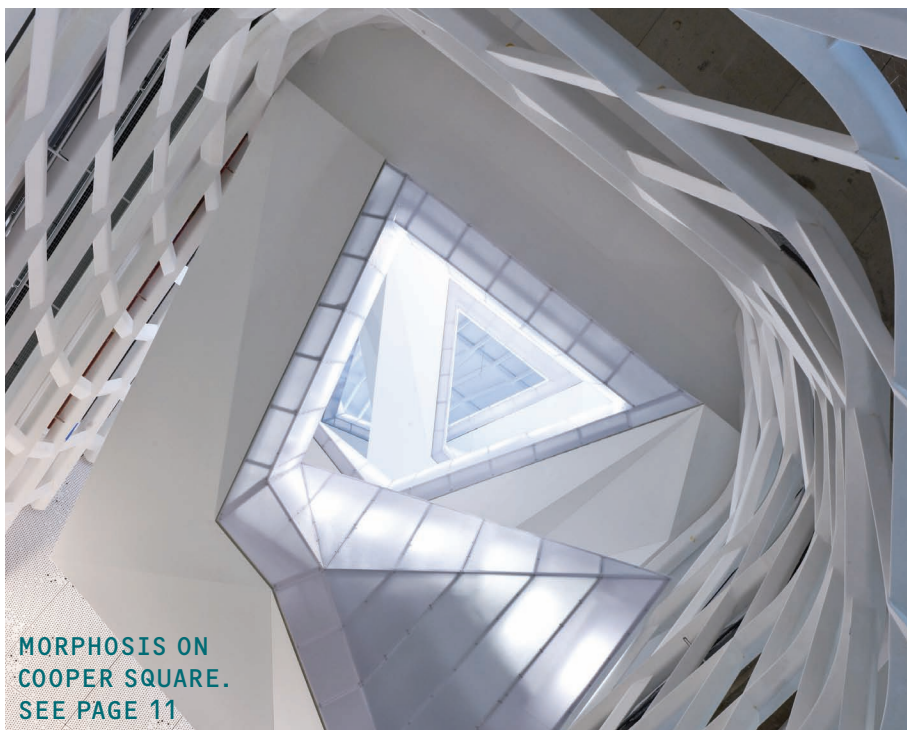
CASEY AT BAT

Casey Jones, a principal at jones|kroloff, has been chosen as the next director of the General Services Administration's Design Excellence initiative, according to Jones and sources at the GSA, in anticipation of an upcoming public announcement. Jones will replace Thomas Grooms, the program's current head, who is retiring.

"I really believe passionately in the Design Excellence program and the importance of having the best architects and artists doing their best work for the federal government," Jones said in a telephone interview with AN.

Jones will leave jones|kroloff—a Bloomfield Hills, Michigan-based design-competition advisory

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MORPHOSIS ON
COOPER SQUARE.
SEE PAGE 11

IWAN BAAH



MATT CHABAN

CITY AIMS TO SALVAGE STALLED LUXURY UNITS FOR MIDDLE CLASS

HARPING ON HOUSING

Last year's bursting real-estate bubble left the five boroughs littered with vacant and half-built projects, many of them market-rate units few now can afford. But city officials are hoping to rescue some of these projects, creating much-needed affordable housing, and steadying the property market as a result. On June 8, the City Council and the Bloomberg administration announced a \$20 million program known as HARP—the Housing Asset Renewal Program—that would subsidize the conversion of over 400 stalled units into affordable apartments.

Beyond leveraging funds to complete and occupy the units themselves, the city aims to bolster

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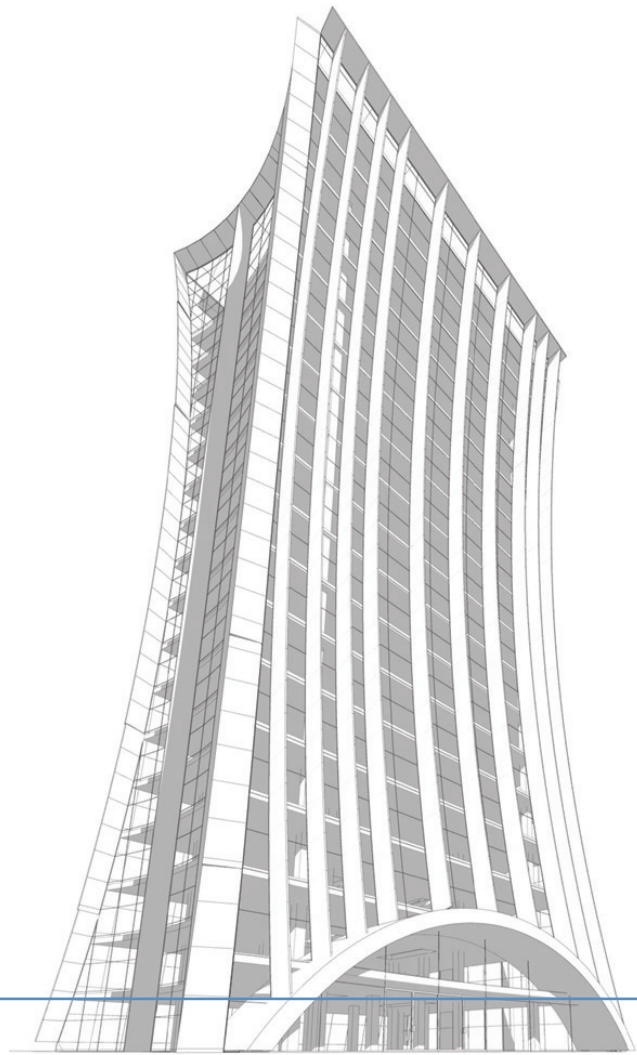


Casey Jones

KELLY KENNEDY

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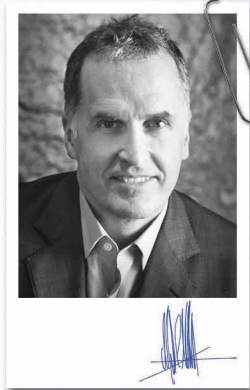
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MY TURN

Mark Sexton, FAIA, Partner, Krueck + Sexton Architects, Chicago, Illinois

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Chicago, Illinois
Glass:
VE13-85 Insulating Laminated
with silk-screen
Photographer:
William Zbaren



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THOUGHT PROCESS

With the expansive period of economic growth of the past fifteen years now officially over—the U.S. was averaging over 3 percent increases in GDP since 1995, but is so far this year down 5.56 percent—the architecture, planning, and urban design professions are in a quandary. What kind of architecture and urbanism will the new economy want, need, or more importantly, financially support? Some pundits are already announcing the death of the much-hyped and derided “star” architecture system and the baroque extravagances of digital fabrication, and hailing the beginning of a more realistic, sober, and sustainable period of design. The hard economic times seem to demand it. This criticism of high design often ignores the spectacular built achievements of the “stars” in recent years, and sometimes sounds like little more than local envy of successful international practices. And yet what about the success of design to influence society, a goal that architects have long argued for? To a worrisome degree, the profession has been bent on realizing the creation of gleaming new cities that seem to exist for only the wealthiest members of society. While it is not the responsibility of architects, for example, to intervene in the financing of the built landscape (in fact, it can be their undoing if they try), design professionals do need to completely rethink how they can bring positive change to how we envision, develop, and live in our cities.

And so with fewer private commissions on the horizon and government RFQs on hold, it is a perfect time for architecture and urban planning to rethink the basics of their professions and embrace a culture of research inside their offices. If the history of past recessions offers any guidelines, clearly the effect on architectural theory, image making, and production was enormous; they all flourished during these periods. The economic depression of the 1930s turned architecture practice upside down (it wasn’t all achieved by MoMA’s 1932 *Modern Architecture* exhibition) and seduced city planners into thinking they should turn away from physical design to public policy. But it also generated scores of exciting ideas and proposals. Frank Lloyd Wright’s Broadacre City, CIAM’s Athens charter, the WPA’s innovative Greenbelt, and the TVA’s new towns program were all products of the period. It was also in this bleak time that our design education was transformed: Walter Gropius established the GSD at Harvard; Mies van der Rohe turned the Armor Institute into the Illinois Institute of Technology; Buckminster Fuller, Josef and Anni Albers, and others at Black Mountain College brought modern education to the arts and design.

Similarly, the economic crisis of the 1970s was also the time of John Hejduk’s experimental and influential architectural education at Cooper Union, the glory years of the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies, and the provocations of *Delirious New York*. This embracing of a research model or independent unit may well mean the downsizing of large offices, the delaying of new ones founded by younger practitioners who hope to build, and even the rolling back of the kind of large commissions that afforded architects their Audi station wagons. But it is indeed time for designers to hunker down, rethink the future, and even rethink how to think.

WILLIAM MENKING

FINANCING AND FINESSE HELP
SELL IN HARLEM

BEST OFFER

In the model apartments at Romy Goldman’s Hamilton Lofts, the swag includes square cookies with a vivid apartment-house facade. The 12-unit Edgecombe Avenue condo is only her second in the city; at her first, Goldman said, they gave out Belgian chocolates.

Goldman’s company, Gold Development, built Hamilton Lofts over the 18 months that roughly parallel the halt in mortgage activity. Goldman, formerly a junior partner to veteran developer Donald Capoccia at 48 Bond Street, had bought two parcels around an empty lot with a troubled title for less than \$1 million in late 2007. Over the next year, she converted them into 12 units with two balconies each and washer-dryers. “We learned from Bond Street,” she said on a tour, flourishing a hand shower (great for pets) and indicating radiant-floor heating under the master bathroom’s slate floor. So far, Goldman said, she has sold two units and entered contract on a third. But the prices have dropped from her initial forecast.

The broker, Halstead Property, is asking between \$629,000 and \$715,000 for two-bedrooms. That represents a roughly 18 percent shrinkage from the initial offering price. Goldman calculates the per-square-foot price around \$535. “It’s not about making money,” she said. “It’s about survival.”

The buyers so far fit the salary-challenged but ambitious customer Goldman lured to an earlier development, the nearby Hamilton Parc. “We had a bunch of teachers buy there,” she said. By hustling to win approval for Federal Housing Administration financing that allows buyers to put down as little as 3.5 percent at closing, Goldman said she hopes to enable more teachers and public servants to buy at Hamilton Lofts.

The design by Harlem-based GF55 Partners (project architects at 48 Bond) balances Harlem tradition with contemporary comforts. Balconies look onto City College’s Gothic campus and an old church. “If you overdesign, it will not wear so well over time,” she said. The elevator opens onto each unit, and mail collection stays in the vestibule so that only residents and guests can get into the lobby. “What makes Harlem charming is you get your townhome,” said Goldman. “Here, you get that privacy. You just don’t have to take care of a townhouse.”

Goldman does not carp about selling an upscale Harlem address in a financial crisis. “I would have loved to have built smaller units, because those fly, but the floorplates weren’t generous enough to carve into smaller apartments,” she said. So she keeps hosting open-houses, drawing neighbors and potential first-time buyers. “It’s been tough,” she admitted. “It’s not even the price: People are scared to take the plunge.” But cookies just might take the edge off. **ALEC APPELBAUM**



LETTERS

HAMMER AWAY AT THE AIA

Just a quick note of appreciation for your efforts at maintaining a non-AIA based discussion on some of the more pressing architectural issues in the region and beyond. Keep hammering the AIA, especially the crowd up in Connecticut that gave an Honor Award to a parking garage (at the 2007 AIA Connecticut Design Awards). Talk about phony green. Keep up the dia-

logue—power to ye!

JONATHAN LAVERY
MANNING SILVERSTEIN ARCHITECTS
NEW YORK

CORRECTIONS

Our feature on malls in New York (“Mall City,” *AN* 12_07.08.2009) misstated the role of BBG-BBGM at the Gateway Center at Bronx Terminal Market. The firm served as design architects for the massing and exteriors of

the buildings, and as overall architects for the project, not as architect of record.

An article about Toll Brothers’ plans in Jersey City (“Power Play,” *AN* 12_07.08.2009) gave an incorrect title for Jill Edelman at the Powerhouse Arts District Neighborhood Association. She is past-president, not president. And Toll’s proposed towers would rise to between 300 and

400 feet; they would not all be 300 feet tall.

A report on renovations at the Four Seasons (“A New Leaf,” *AN* 10_06.03.2009) misstated Phyllis Lambert’s role at the restaurant. While her nephew Edgar Bronfman Jr. is an owner of the restaurant, and Lambert has long chosen and worked with architects for the space, she is not a co-owner.

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER JULY 29, 2009

OPEN > RESTAURANT



> **DBGB**
299 Bowery
Tel: 212-460-5777
Designer: Thomas Schlessner/
Design Bureaux

The building that houses DBGB, Daniel Boulud's new burger temple, is of fairly recent vintage, but designer Thomas Schlessner of Design Bureaux has taken pains to make it mesh with the old restaurant supply houses on the Bowery. On the dining room's cast-concrete floor stand shelves laden with wine bottles, ingredients, and pots and pans, the latter souvenirs from star chefs around the world. (The rest of the supplies are functional, and cooks venture out to retrieve what they need during the service.) The shelves also cleverly define space without blocking views: They partially enclose booths set into the wall, and separate the dining room from the kitchen, whose bustle can be glimpsed through stacks of napkins and jars of capers. DBGB also borrows from French bistros, with chairs modeled on a classic, 19th-century style, and mirrored walls featuring hand-written menu items. Layered over this antique aesthetic is a sleekly modern one: The vestibule is a minimalist glass box, and the bistro menu is surrounded by gastronomic quotes that create "the pop version of a bistro mirror," said Schlessner. The dynamic space is tied together with details like scalloped corners on booths and tables, echoed in metal door plaques and in brackets neatly painted around the menu. **JULIA GALEF**

BILL MILNE

EAVESDROP > SARA HART

TOAST POINTS

Condé Nast's *Women's Wear Daily* reports, "Jeffrey Nemeroff, longtime art director at [Condé Nast's] *Architectural Digest*, has left the magazine, not long after butting heads with the magazine's famously tough-talking editor in chief, Paige Rense.

"Nemeroff, who like much of the magazine's editorial staff is based in California, is also a painter who recently had a show at the Neuhoft Gallery in New York. In May, *New York* magazine's Daily Intel blog reported Rense had called designers to discourage them from attending Nemeroff's opening and celebratory dinner. Rense told *New York*'s Steve Fishman that designers believed *Architectural Digest* was directly involved and felt pressured to purchase a painting. She also said she had been 'blindsided' by the event, though the gallery owner was quoted saying Rense had given the show her blessing months earlier."

Nemeroff is not talking, but others are. A couple of designers told Eavesdrop that the "pressure" flows in both directions. They said that Rense "encourages" the inclusion of renowned Color-Field painter Kenneth Noland's work in photo shoots for the magazine, and his work has appeared on at least one cover. Noland is her husband. Eavesdrop smells a double standard.

COOPER SCOOPER

Eavesdrop held a glass to the emergency-exit door of the Cooper-Hewitt and heard rumblings that a ten-member, Smithsonian-led committee was about to announce a new museum director to succeed Paul Warwick Thompson. It sounded as if the committee was down to two candidates—Paola Antonelli and Aaron Betsky. The latter volunteered to a source that he was not in the running, but we think he was merely trying to throw us off the scent. Our olfactory sense is too highly tuned to be distracted. Expect an announcement any minute.

BLIND ITEM!

What tony architecture firm with a lot of empty desks is using Model Bartenders (modelbartenders.com) to staff the house for an upcoming interview? Imagine. The prospective client tours the studio, which is stocked with 25-year-old hunks pretending to detail porticoes and dormers, and wonders how they make time to go to the gym. Eavesdrop is fighting the urge to send a disco ball to go with the human props.

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ADVOCATES SAY ENERGY BILL
COULD TRANSFORM U.S. BUILDING
EFFICIENCY

Charged Up

Much of the attention focused on the climate change bill approved by the U.S. House of Representatives on June 26 has surrounded the somewhat controversial cap-and-trade program, which limits greenhouse gases through a system of emissions permits. A less noted part of the American Clean Energy and Security Act is the nearly three dozen programs the bill contains with far-reaching impacts on the built environment and those who design, construct, and operate the millions of buildings scattered across the country.

"The fact that there was so much that relates to buildings is an important moment for the building community," said Andrew Goldberg, the senior director for federal relations at the AIA. "It supports the message we've been pushing for a long time, that buildings are a part of the solution."

The most expansive piece of buildings-related legislation in the act is the establishment of a national building code that sets minimum standards for energy usage in all new and existing buildings. States have the option of developing their own code or applying the national one, but they must make a 30 percent reduction in energy usage within 18 months of the bill's passage; a 50 percent reduction by 2014 for residential buildings and 2015 for commercial buildings;

and an additional five percent reduction every three years through 2030.

The bill also calls for federal agencies and federally managed housing to meet or exceed the new standards. Other elements that could mean opportunities for architects include energy standards for retrofitted buildings and water-efficiency standards for buildings, appliances, and products. "There are a number of market barriers that must be overcome to make green building affordable, but these new standards will help spur that shift," said Jason Hartke, the director for advocacy and public policy at the U.S. Green Building Council.

There are yet other aspects of the bill that have green-building advocates excited. One program provides incentives to financial institutions to offer generous loans to projects that use sustainable technology and smart-growth practices. At the same time, it creates a demonstration program at HUD to rethink its housing projects as sustainability laboratories. And there are grants for affordable housing developers to include efficient systems in their projects; credits to mobile-home residents to trade in their current models for newer, more efficient ones; and funding for product development and educational programs for designers, contractors, manufacturers, and building operators.

The bill now awaits its companion in the Senate, which was expected to be released in late July. Goldberg expected the Senate version to be comparable to the House bill, barring last-minute negotiations. "It could be stronger or about the same," he said. "Or it could always be a wash." **MATT CHABAN**

TWO ARCHITECTURALLY SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS EMERGE FROM CORNELL'S BUILDING FREEZE

ITHACA THAW



Amid strained budgets and a campus-wide building stall at Cornell, two high-profile pieces of architecture are moving ahead: the OMA-designed Paul Milstein Hall for the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning (AAP), and the Pei Cobb Freed-designed addition to the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art. Both projects were pushed through by pressing need. AAP faced losing its accreditation due to sub-par facilities, and the museum's collection has nearly quadrupled since its current building opened in 1973.

Milstein Hall's path to groundbreaking has been nothing short of torturous, with previous iterations designed by Steven Holl and Barkow Leibinger eliminated along the way. The OMA design faced opposition from the city as well as from some students and faculty, who argued that the building was extravagant and out of step with campus sustainability goals. And then came the economic downturn, which forced the university to reevaluate all building projects on campus. Deans of each school were asked to plead the case for their respective projects, and the AAP's accreditation woes pushed the project through. The trustees unanimously agreed to move ahead with the project on May 23. "It's a remarkable conclusion to a complex tale," Kent Kleinman, AAP's dean, told *AN*.

Eliminating a parking garage from the scope of work for the project reduced costs by \$12 million to \$55.5 million. "The decision to build Paul Milstein Hall now, while deferring the parking garage project, caps a decade-long struggle to address inadequate facilities at the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning, and to preserve the pre-eminence of the nation's top undergraduate architecture program," said Cornell President David Skorton in a statement. The building is expected to be complete in time for the 2011 fall term.

Flying under the radar, and with far less controversy, the addition to the Johnson Museum will add 16,000 square feet to the facility, long considered an exemplary university art museum building. The austere concrete structure has a dramatic cantilevered gallery on the south side. The

addition will be built on the building's north side. "We began planning and fundraising in 1995," said Frank Robinson, director of the museum. "We raised all the money ourselves." I.M. Pei, the original designer with John Sullivan, has given his blessing for the addition, and Sullivan, now an associate partner at Pei Cobb Freed, is designing the extension, which includes both above- and below-ground galleries. The addition is very much in keeping with the 1970s idiom of the original. "We wanted to preserve the stylistic and artistic integrity of the building," Robinson said. "It's a masterpiece and a wonderful building to work with. I didn't feel the need to assert myself, but rather to complement the building."

Pei designed the museum with expansion in mind. The lower level included a knockout panel for a below-ground extension. Sullivan's design includes a new lecture hall, gallery for contemporary art, and a small, sunken garden area. The project is also scheduled for completion in 2011.

ALAN G. BRAKE

Above: OMA's Milstein Hall boasts a green roof with skylights. Below: The interior. Bottom: Pei Cobb Freed's addition to the Johnson Museum mirrors the 1973 original.



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PERMANENTLY MAD



Revamped icon **2 Columbus Circle** doubled gallery space for new owner **Museum of Arts and Design's (MAD)** expanding collection of rotating exhibits. Yet what's captivating visitors is a new permanent display: the cable-suspended ceremonial stair designed by **Allied Works Architecture**. Functional and beguiling, it floats on threadlike wires amidst ever-changing shows of celebrated sculpture, earning its place as another example of the museum's commitment to contemporary handicraft.

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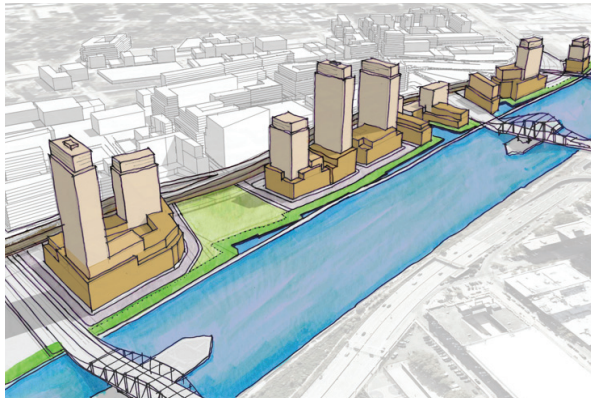
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COUNCIL OK'S REZONING PLAN, RESHAPING SWATH OF SOUTHWEST BRONX

A Grander Concourse

Designed by Alsatian-born engineer Louis Aloys Risse, the Grand Concourse in the Bronx was modeled after the Champs-Élysées in Paris, and boasts one of the highest concentrations of art deco architecture in the world. But not all of the great boulevard's five miles are so distinguished. Along the southern tip, stretching from 150th Street to the Harlem River, gas stations, auto body shops, and disused lofts predominate, remnants from the area's industrial past.

Now, the city hopes to transform this stretch of Mott Haven into a modern-day, mixed-use, mixed-income community—a 21st-century version of Risse's vision—through a rezoning plan approved by the city council on June 30. The plan, which covers a 30-block triangle where the river bends, calls for a mix of preservation and new construction to create market-rate and affordable housing

and some manufacturing, while opening up parts of the waterfront for the first time in decades.

Though some contend the plan may only spur further gentrification of the South Bronx, it has been widely embraced for its equity. "I think the community as a whole will create an environment for development we have not seen in a long time," said Cedric Loftin, district manager for Community Board 1. "It creates an opportunity for jobs and housing."

The heart of the plan transforms the lowrise industrial landscape into midrise residential lots, mirroring the eight- and 12-story apartment houses to the north. In a much bolder move, most of the formerly industrial waterfront is being given over to the type of highrise development that now characterizes the Brooklyn and Queens waterfronts, with 40-story residential towers

surrounded by parks and open space. A 2.2-acre park is also planned for the upland section of the district.

The Department of City Planning, which developed the rezoning plan, has set aside loft buildings adjacent to MetroNorth and the Major Deegan Expressway as manufacturing facilities that would retain so-called green-collar jobs. Meanwhile, lofts in more suitable areas will be converted for residential use. The plan uses the city's inclusionary housing bonuses to encourage affordable housing development by offering additional density in exchange for making 20 percent of a project affordable.

But Harry Bubbins, executive director of Friends of Brook Park and a longstanding critic of the rezoning, fears it could have adverse impacts on surrounding areas. "It's the same cookie-cutter gentrification model the Bloomberg administration has deployed throughout the city," Bubbins said. He argued there is not enough infrastructure or public amenities to support an influx of new residents.

Chauncey Young, the education organizer at Highbridge Community Life Center, maintained a healthy skepticism about the city's goals. "Our concern is how long it's going to take," Young said. "These are the guys that promised us a park after the Yankees took ours, and still nothing's been built. As long as they keep their promises, though, this plan can work."

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RONGSHENG COMPLEX

It seemed "kind of unbelievable" for the small Boston firm Höweler + Yoon to land a commission for a tower complex in China, said principal Eric Höweler, but his previous experience with skyscraper design at KPF helped. For the 2.8 million-square-foot office/hotel/retail complex, the developer asked for a design that would be iconic yet

not too bulky, so it wouldn't block the view to a sacred mountain. In Höweler + Yoon's design, a five-story retail podium stands at the base of two towers, which are shaped like parallelograms with curved corners at the obtuse angles to offer slender silhouettes toward the view. The two towers' forms are inversions of each other. The 53-story office tower gently flares out toward the top, while the 48-story hotel tower tapers in, creating a visually dynamic relationship. Adding to the airy look of the towers, curved incisions lead to the acute corners at the top of the hotel and the bottom of the office. The tapering is gentle enough to not be impractical. "When you introduce a slight slope in the section—four meters over 50 stories—the difference between each floor is minor," Höweler said. "That's a lesson from my KPF days, I guess: how to produce a strong gesture within a very economical, feasible form."

LISA DELGADO

Design Architect: Höweler + Yoon Architecture
Associate Architect: Philip Yuan, Shanghai
Archi-Union Architecture Design Co.
Location: Nantong, China
Construction: 2012



CONSTRUCTION SET FOR KAHN-DESIGNED ROOSEVELT ISLAND MEMORIAL

FDR Finally Comes Home

After nearly four decades, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms Park has received permission from the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation to begin construction of the Louis I. Kahn-designed park at the southern tip of Roosevelt Island. "This is the end of the beginning as we now embark on the construction of a great public park," William vanden Heuvel, chairman of FDR Four Freedoms Park, told *AN* after the organization's June 25 announcement.

Commissioned in 1973 by then-New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller in honor of President Roosevelt, the park is named for the former president's esteemed "Four Freedoms" speech. Renowned architect Kahn was commissioned to design the memorial, and his vision remains largely intact to this day despite the long road to realization.

The design centers around two main elements: the garden, representing human influence over nature; and what Kahn called the "room," evoking fundamental truths of architecture. Kahn's work was completed just months before his death in 1974, and the design then made its way into the hands of New York-based firm Mitchell/Giurgola Architects. Forming a joint venture with two associates from Kahn's office who had originally worked on the project, the firm completed a set of working drawings for construction in 1975.

A series of governmental and financial vagaries in the 1970s caused the project to lose momentum, and it slumbered until the 1990s,

when the island received a grant to rebuild and repair seawalls. Some of these funds helped to reconstruct rip-rap that encircles the edge of the park, and to contour the land in preparation for future construction. Then came new interest in Kahn, spurred by the documentary *My Architect*, directed by Kahn's son Nathaniel, and a 2005 show at the Cooper Union, *Coming to Light*.

Mitchell/Giurgola partner and project architect Paul Broches noted that only minor changes have been made to Kahn's work. "We've updated the drawings to comply with current ADA requirements and conducted more in-depth analysis of structural issues, without changing the appearance of Kahn's original design," Broches said. "While Kahn didn't anticipate some of the issues we had to deal with, his design was well thought-out and thoroughly designed, speaking for itself very strongly."

Divided into three phases, the park is expected to take 30 months to complete. "Right now we have our funding in place to build and

complete Phase One. We must demonstrate our financial ability to complete each phase prior to beginning construction," said Gina Pollara, executive director of FDR Four Freedoms Park. Phase One includes construction of the "room," a 72-foot-square plaza open to the sky, that is expected to take 12 months.

To ensure that subsequent phases are completed as scheduled, the nonprofit FDR Four Freedoms Park is accepting donations through a "Sponsor a Freedom Tree" campaign that will include 150 Little Leaf Lindens in the park. When completed, the project will be the first architectural work of Kahn's in New York City, as well as the first memorial dedicated to President Roosevelt in his home state. Construction of the first phase is scheduled to begin this September.

DANIELLE RAGO

Renderings of the memorial (above) reflect only minor changes to Kahn's original vision. The first phase of construction will include the "room," located at the very tip of the memorial site (below).



COURTESY FOR FOUR FREEDOMS PARK

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER JULY 29, 2009



The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art - New Academic Building

Architect: Morphosis and Gruzen Samton Architects

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HARPING ON HOUSING continued from front page surrounding neighborhoods, thus avoiding the blight that plagued New York during the 1970s and 1980s. With 138 stalled projects confirmed by the Department of Buildings, and doubtless more unidentified, plenty need support.

"Private developments that sit vacant or unfinished could have a destabilizing effect on our neighborhoods, but we're not about to let that happen," said Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg in a statement. "This program holds out the promise of addressing the unintended blight caused by vacant sites, while transforming what would have been market-rate buildings into affordable housing for working-class New Yorkers."

The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), which is administering the council-created program, will issue a request for applicants in July that is expected to remain open through December. Projects will be judged on three criteria: which offer the deepest discounts, which require the least amount of subsidy, and which provide the most "stabilization" to a neighborhood. For instance, a single building in need of subsidy in a ten-block radius is a more likely target than 15 buildings in need within a five-block radius, according to Andrew Doba, a council spokesperson.

While details of the plan are still in draft form, the expectation is that most money will be spent in the outer boroughs, where the greatest speculation took place and also where the city can stretch its money farthest.

For each unit pledged as an affordable rental, applicants will receive \$50,000, an amount officials emphasize is only a third to half the amount HPD spends to subsidize a typical affordable unit. Both unfinished and finished-but-empty projects are eligible, though the expectation is that only a portion

of a project's total units would be converted from market-rate. Under one likely scenario, a developer would convert a certain number to affordable units and use the subsidy to help lower rent on the remaining market-rate ones, making them more attractive to tenants.

But first, those seeking money must agree to take a loss on their projects, since the city insists the program is not a bailout. "This will require real sacrifice from the banker and the developers," said Catie Marshall, a spokesperson for HPD. "We're not going to bankrupt anyone, but we're not making them whole, either."

Developers large and small, nonprofit and high-end, are already hailing the program. Steven Spinola, president of the Real Estate Board of New York, acknowledged that while the program may not directly affect his members—many of the city's most prominent and well-funded developers—it would still provide a benefit by absorbing excess inventory and stabilizing lending. "I think it's a creative use of rather limited city resources, and at the same time throws a little help to a developer in challenging times," he said. "It will create opportunities that did not exist before."

And given the still-languishing financial markets, HARP may be the only opportunity to get projects off the ground. "There's so much inventory, why would a bank finance any new construction?" asked Julien Vernet, marketing director for affordable housing developer the Briarwood Organization.

Josh Lockwood, director of Habitat NYC, lauded the city's effort as a pioneering tactic in hard times. "They're light years ahead of anywhere else, just trying to make this work," he said. "I hope other cities will follow."

MC

UP A CREEK continued from front page

1.8-mile canal snaking past Red Hook and Park Slope to be a Superfund site, potentially bringing some \$300 million in federal support for a purge. Mayor Bloomberg would rather keep the cleanup local, paying with a combination of congressional earmarks and corporate guilt money. The period for public testimony for or against the Superfund designation ended on July 8, with bloggers calling the pro-EPA faction winners.

That's not going to stop Susannah Drake, principal of dlandstudio and president of the New York Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, who together with the Gowanus Canal Conservancy has developed a wildly innovative plan to clean up the canal literally and aesthetically with what she has dubbed a "Sponge Park."

The cutely named park calls for a long esplanade with bridges and a working wetland to absorb and filter surface water runoff—which after a rainfall currently flows with raw sewage—in an effort to clean the contaminated canal water as well as increase the number of open green spaces for public access. (Once the nasty smells ease up, presumably.) While the park would not be geared toward any particular user group, "it is intended to be a very smart, well-designed, open-space system that will make the neighborhood nicer and more productive, as well," Drake said.

The detailed plan includes plant life that is supposed to thrive in difficult depths, as well as plants that absorb PCBs and heavy metals, among them Dogwood, Honey Locust, Sunflower, Beach Rose, Pussy Willow, Pond Weed, and Duckweed. Lauren Collins, acting executive director at the Gowanus Canal Conservancy, told *AN* hopefully that "the project will help people look at the canal as a waterfront and not a sewer."

Cynics may scratch their heads, but the proposal recently got a serious boost when Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez earmarked \$300,000 for a one-block pilot version of the project. Councilmembers David Yassky, Bill de Blasio, and Borough President Marty Markowitz are also supporters. The future of Gowanus may smell sweeter than ever before. **DR**

The park at Sackett Street is part of a system of wetland basins to help filter toxins and contaminants from the canal.



COURTESY DLANDSTUDIO

CRIT> 41 COOPER SQUARE



A grand stair dominates the interior as it rises from the lobby.

IWAN BAAN

Like the road to Hell, New York's Cooper Square has been paved with good intentions. With the nation's greatest design school, The Cooper Union, as landlord or neighbor, and with the city's noblest civic structure, (the school's landmark 1859 Foundation Building as renovated by the inimitable John

Hejduk) casting its magnificent shadow, architects faced with nearby sites have visibly tried to raise their game. And have, mostly, failed. Rem Koolhaas' and Herzog & de Meuron's unbuilt Astor Place hotel collapsed in anxious hype and resistable ugliness. Charles Gwathmey's glassy residential tower for the same

site was met with critical jeers, though its geometrical clarity and quirky elegance will stand the test of time. Carlos Zapata's nearby hotel slouches toward Miami. Even Smith-Miller + Hawkinson's local coffee shop, sly and steely, was eventually defaced into a B-list Starbucks. The greatest local modern building remains Rolf Oehlhausen's 1990 dormitory tower, which through color and profile suggests a belltower to the Foundation Building's basilica.

Into this fraught setting arrives a new academic building by Los Angeles architect and recent Pritzker Prize-winner Thom Mayne, with New York collaborator Gruzen Samton. The result is a remarkable combination of excess and restraint. It consolidates into a smallish 100-foot-by-180-foot-by-120-foot volume (along the east side of 3rd Avenue at 7th Street), a dense array of labs, classrooms, and studios for Cooper's schools of Engineering, Humanities, and Arts. Like a partially cored and peeled apple, it features a dramatic void within (a steep four-story staircase below a narrow five-story atrium,

lined by a swoopy glass-fiber-reinforced-composite matrix that's like a 3D-modeling software mesh come to life), and a semi-detached skin without (a finely-perforated stainless-steel weather screen, masking a standard glass curtain wall behind). As with Mayne's 2004 Caltrans headquarters in Los Angeles, the decoratively-patterned exterior screen folds expressively, features automated solar shading, and makes the building look bigger than it is.

That screen is one of many ingeniously adapted panel systems and off-the-shelf components deployed throughout this tightly programmed and budgeted building. A sturdy mechanical vocabulary of tread plates, meshes, and brackets ennobles the steel vernacular of laboratory tables, studio stools, and lockers. All this rewards the imagination of those (many of them Cooper graduates) who contemplate entire buildings assembled from the Sweets or McMaster-Carr catalogs, and allowed these highly technical 175,000 square feet to come in at a reported \$150 million. It also results in a legibility that, in this set-

ting, becomes a form of teaching. But while there is a financial economy between the ingenious moves and the expressive ones, the conceptual economy is less clear. It's unpleasant to recall those precisely calibrated structural or technical details while observing others, such as the massive steel tubes that flail around the central staircase railings, whose effect is exorbitantly visual.

This may be precisely the wrong lesson to expose to budding engineers and artists, of all people: that the architectural component of a building is an expressively decorative cloak (like the screen wrapper or the atrium lining) that brushes up against its essential body but is visibly surplus to it. Noting the artsy (or "architecty") bits of the building, one can't help erasing them in one's mind while retaining the intricate spatial composition and technical élan, and conclude that the result might be stranger and stronger—with some provocative breathing room for the transformations and appropriations that the nation's brightest art and engineering students will wreak over the semesters.

One can imagine a building whose greatest visual effect is to frame and incite the visions and emotions of generations of students, more than to preserve the singular signature moves of any one man or moment.

Nevertheless, the place packs a punch. The what-the-hell casualness of some of the geometries and gestures may prove a tonic to the self-seriousness of local architecture culture and Cooper Square itself. The monolithic affect and formal self-reference evoke the micro-monumentality perfected for academic and public buildings in another era and idiom by the likes of Roche, Pei, and Stubbins. The willful or thoughtful double-take gags—the folds, gashes, and swoops—visibly insist that someone, somewhere, was trying to do *something*. Which, by the raised standards of Cooper Square (and especially by the reduced standards of Manhattan, where a perpetual perfect storm of mendacity, provinciality, density, and complexity undermines attempts at architecture worthy of a global capital), is almost heavenly.

THOMAS DE MONCHAUX



THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER JULY 29, 2009



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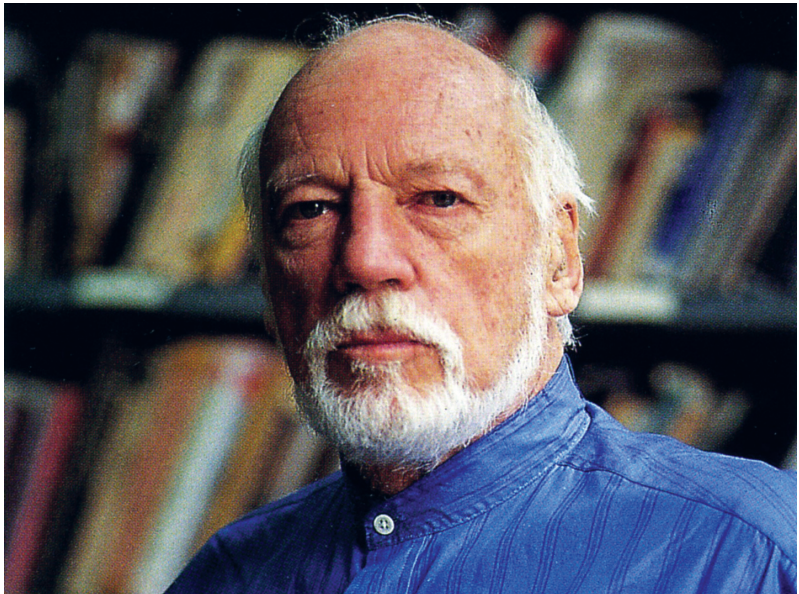
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RECESSION TALES > JOHN JOHANSEN



COURTESY JOHN JOHANSEN

Architect, artist, innovator—John Johansen has powered through a 50-year career spanning the Harvard Five, the glory days of SOM under Bunshaft, the modern house mecca that was New Canaan in the '50s, and his late-blooming experiments in nanoarchitecture. Now 93 years old, Johansen has plenty to say about the creative power of resilience.

AM: You graduated from Harvard's GSD in 1942. Did you set up a practice right away?

JJ: No, that was during the war, but I couldn't join up because I had a bum heart, so I worked for the National Housing Agency. And then after the war, I went looking for work at SOM because they were the only office doing modern work, and they were very busy. In those days, they would hire you with no interview at all, just on the strength of the exposure to Breuer, Gropius, and Albers at the GSA. They just said, "Be here at 9 a.m. tomorrow."

As a design assistant on SOM's United Nations project and Manhattan House, were you working with Gordon Bunshaft?

Oh yes. I learned a lot from him about strategies for designs, when to say no to clients, and when to draw back and insist on a design when it was good. He was such an impressive businessman: He had this chuckle in his voice that was most useful in stopping clients. I have my own useful technique when a client wants something I don't: I look them right in the eye and say, "Where is your soul?"

In 1949, you told Bunshaft you wanted to leave. What happened?

Bunshaft said, "You're doing very well here. Stay on, you'll get to the top." But I said, "No, I have to do it myself." I had this remodeling job in Schenectady. And then I set up practice in Connecticut. I made about \$3,000 that year. In 1950, I was remodeling and working in a house for my sister and her husband. I had this room at street level and one day some prospective clients came in. I was wearing sneakers—that didn't do me any good—then my three-year-old daughter came in with two eggs (I was supposed to be looking after her while my wife was out) and I put them on the slop-

ing drafting board. They rolled to the ground, and when I turned around she was bringing me two more, but the prospective clients had fled.

You formed a group in New Canaan with Philip Johnson, Marcel Breuer, Eliot Noyes, and Landis Gores. Did you exchange ideas?

We commiserated, shared celebrations, and had drinking parties. We chose each other carefully. I was closest to Breuer. I learned more from him: He was not Gropius, he was not mechanistic, he was Hungarian. But he really wasn't worth talking to because he would just grunt most of the time. Philip Johnson was a great talker and the ringleader, but I parted company with him when he went postmodern.

How did you make ends meet when things were slow?

I went straight back to New York and taught at Pratt. I told them I wanted to teach a course where the word architecture was never mentioned. I thought they wouldn't have that course and students should think about the experience of space, how you feel when you go past a wall of masonry that's eight feet thick and, by chance, you bark your knuckles. That means something: It's not an imitation. I wanted them to know the honesty of materials and how you use them with common sense.

They said, "OK. See you next year," and I said, "No, I'll see you in two weeks." And I taught at Pratt for the next 50 years.

How did you ride out economic downturns?

I wasn't hit by them so much because I kept it small, two or three people. The more you can do yourself, rather than hiring and firing and all that, the better. I knew that because my parents were itinerant painters. But the worst was when postmodernism hit. It almost destroyed Breuer's office. I.M. Pei hurt a lot. Postmodernism was all clients wanted for a while. I had to fold up. Now, of course, it came and went like a fart in a windstorm.

I never compromised. Genius has only hit me three or four times. You don't rush out like Archimedes naked saying you discovered the weight of water. It's moments of quiet—like now—when things come together.



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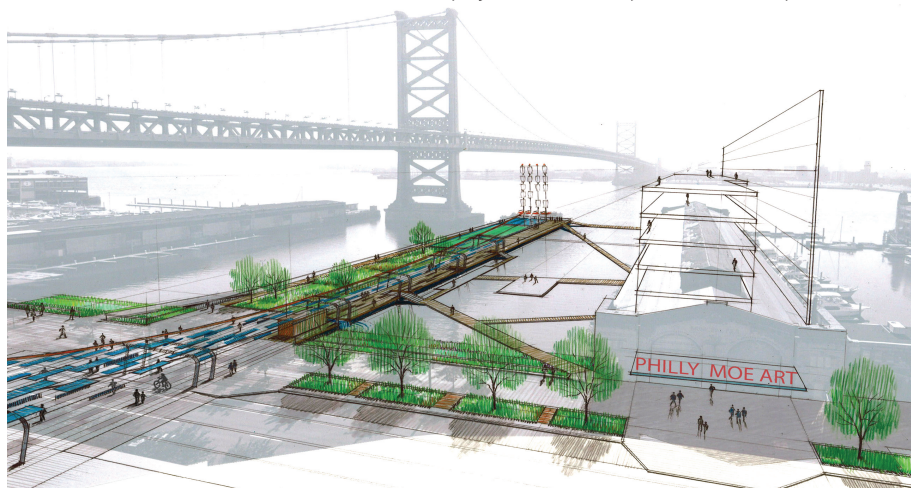
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Andropogon Associates' plan for Philadelphia's Pier 11.



COURTESY ANDROPOGON ASSOCIATES

FINALISTS NAMED TO REMAKE DELAWARE RIVER WATERFRONT

FOUR VIE FOR PHILLY PIER

Visions for a new Philadelphia waterfront took another step forward last month when the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation (DRWC) presented design finalists for the redevelopment of Pier 11, a run-down site along the Delaware River and the first phase of Philadelphia's broader riverfront redesign plan.

Selected from 26 proposals, the four finalists are Philadelphia-based Andropogon Associates and the New York-based James Corner Field Operations, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, and W Architecture and Landscape Architecture.

At a June 17 public presentation of the finalists' designs, the proposals varied widely—some showing conceptual ideas and others laying out detailed, site-specific plans—but all offered ideas for a redefined edge. One of the most comprehensive proposals, developed by Andropogon Associates, transforms the existing pier into an ecologically engaging place powered by tidal, wind, and solar energy, with adaptive reuse of the pier's historic structures. "It's an opportunity to actually develop a paradigm shift in the way the city relates to the river, and how the river relates to the city," Andropogon principal José Almiñana told AN.

The other finalists took a more conceptual aim at the project. Corner, principal at James Corner Field Operations, compared Pier 11 to his firm's work on New York's High Line. Both sites, he said, are underutilized areas that can be transformed into an economic opportunity for the city while providing a new public space for its inhabitants. Van Valkenburgh's presentation offered previous park projects, including designs for New York City's Union Square and Brooklyn Bridge Park, highlighting the latter's sustainable elements. Lastly, W Architecture and Landscape Architecture proposed ideas based on the firm's completed urban waterfront projects, emphasizing the interconnectivity of civic and natural environments.

Built as a timber structure in 1916, Pier 11 was used by national and international steamers carrying fruit, salt, and cargo, but gradually succumbed to decay. The 80-foot-by-540-foot strip at the foot of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge will "now bring a new look at public design along the waterfront, as well as a new way to reuse old industrial piers within the context of first-class public realm design," said Joseph Forkin, vice president for operations and development at the DRWC. Eventual plans for the waterfront also include the reuse of Pier 9 and a former Water Department building.

The DRWC's planning committee, chaired by Marilyn Jordan Taylor, is expected to make its recommendation for the winning design team by July 31, and Forkin said he hoped an announcement would be made soon thereafter. **DR**

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A PARK FIT FOR QUEENS continued from front page conference where he also announced the \$100 million acquisition of the 30 acres of land comprising both park and housing developments.

A major piece of the park plan—a ribbon of green where abandoned brownfields now lie—is its gradation from a more active, urban environment on the northern end to a more passive, natural one to the south. The north section is focused around the Green, a large ovoid field ringed by a running track and likely to contain ball fields. (Details remain tentative, as the park is still in the conceptual phase.)

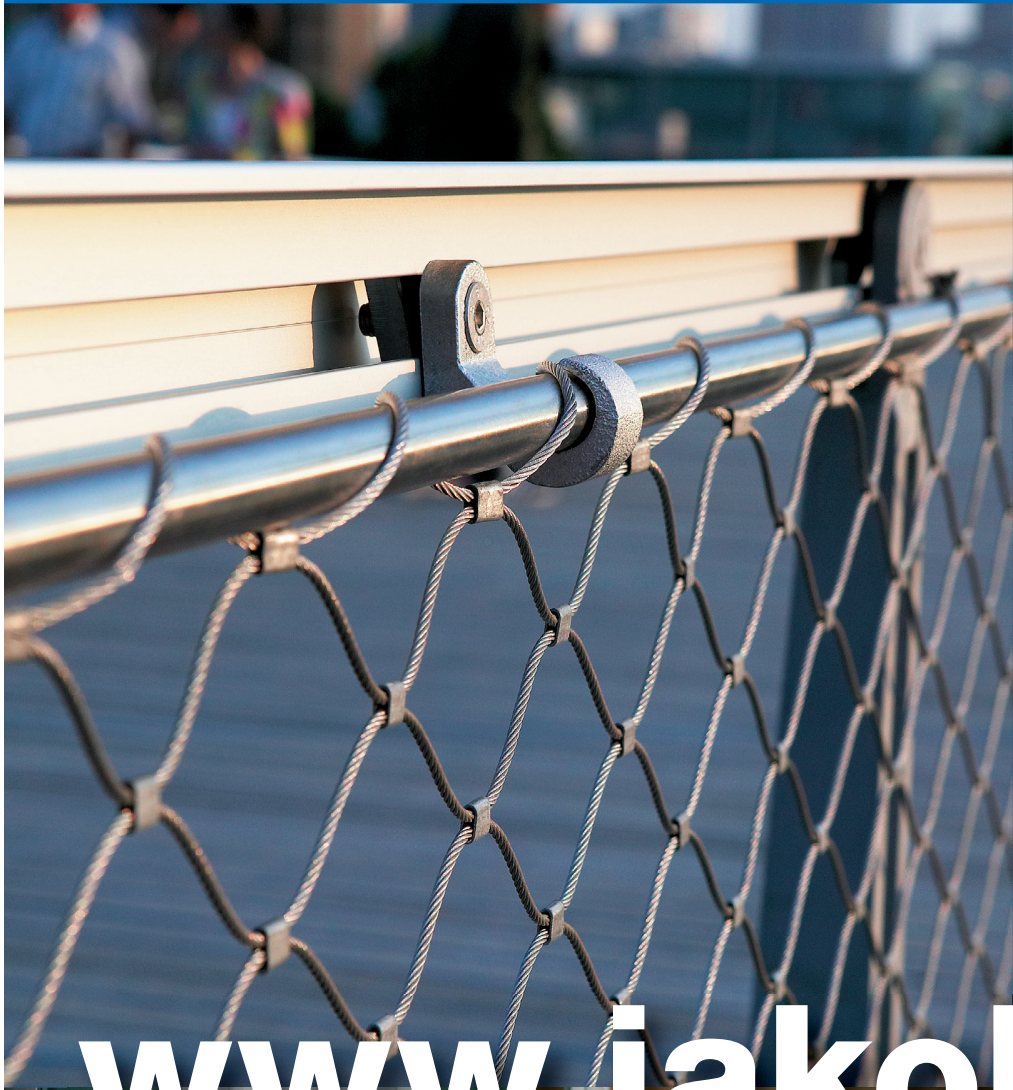
There, too, basketball and racquetball courts and a playground will spread beneath an arbor of trees, called the Grove. "We always want the park to be separate from the surrounding urban environment, even when it's a few steps away," Balsley said. That ethos also goes for a new pier building that will house a water taxi stop as well as concessions, bathrooms, and facilities for park staff. Its roof will be an extension of the

pier, with an overlook onto the water and space for recreation.

Such undulating topography is a marquee feature of the park, particularly at the southern end, where landfill tossed up by boat makers and sundry industrial occupants from the past created a 25-foot hill that the design team will transform into the Promontory, a landscaped hillock crisscrossed with walking paths and offering incomparable views of the East River and Manhattan to the west and Newtown Creek and Brooklyn to the south. At the tip, there will be a kayak launch as well.

"This is an anachronistic setting for a park, with water on two sides, and it's also Acropolisian, with that elevation created by the Promontory," Marion Weiss said. "We really wanted to embrace that topography and make it a part of the park." It is the hope of the design team that the opportunity to convert landfill into pasture, the man-made into nature, will become standard procedure for more environmentally-savvy developments in the future. **MC**

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CRIT> AFTERPARTY AT P.S.1



VICTORIA MONJO

This year, in addition to building the annual party pavilion, P.S.1 and MoMA are celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Young Architects Program (YAP) with two exhibitions: a survey of the program's history in Queens, and a small show on 2009's five finalists in Manhattan. The shows offer an opportunity to reflect on the program's overall impact and to give some context to this year's scheme, *Afterparty*, designed by the talented architects MOS.

Afterparty, according to a wall text at MoMA, "presents the minimum essentials of space, structure, and environment. The title refers to contemporary architecture's obligation, in the current economic and ecological crisis, to seek out and take on new roles—in a period of renewed austerity 'after the party,' so to speak." Rather than austerity, the renderings spoke to a gloom very much in the air at the beginning of the year when the selection was announced. It simultaneously evoked industrial ruins and primitive huts. The complex sequence of tower cones and the generally heavy appearance, however, seemed to reject a minimal approach to structure and spatial experience. The entry's moody, enigmatic quality overshadowed such concerns, however, with a provocative beauty.

As built, *Afterparty* is hardly photogenic, and is not so alluring in person—all awkward proportions and lumpy surfaces. The thatched exterior, which in the

renderings was to be variegated from grays and brown to almost white, appears to be an almost uniformly brown mat of fake fur. One has to touch the hot and scratchy surface—which is supposed to provide comfort in an already hot and dusty P.S.1 courtyard—to realize it is made of natural vegetation, not synthetic material. The material is affixed to a cheap-looking mylar netting visible underneath. The structure is a system of standard aluminum fence poles. Inside, the experience is somewhat better. *Afterparty* offers plenty of shade, and some cooling, though that seems to come as much from the mechanical sprinklers installed in the cones as from the much-touted chimney effect of the cones' design.

In truth, this rendering-versus-reality problem has dogged YAP throughout its history. Few of the previous pavilions had done much to temper the harsh environment of the walled courtyard, and most have been poorly constructed and fared badly over the course of the summer. These results spring from the constraints of a compressed timeline and a tiny budget. Many teams have tried to overcome these limitations with outside donations

and hordes of student laborers. But this is also the result of a program that has privileged the kind of showy formalism that *Afterparty* claims to critique, while in fact merely wrapping it in a scratchy fur coat.

MoMA may be tacitly acknowledging the shortcomings of the project in its small exhibition: There are no photographs of the project as built, only those beautiful renderings. Both exhibitions tout the program as a launching pad for young firms, and this has often been the case. As YAP moves into its second decade, however, both institutions would be well served by examining more closely the process and priorities of the program. The construction schedule could be extended or the budget expanded. Materials could be provided in advance or recycled from year to year. The program should emphasize innovations in construction and quality building just as it emphasizes form-making. In the ten years since YAP was launched, architecture has claimed a larger place in the public's imagination. As it moves into adolescence, YAP should deliver compelling temporary architecture, not just compelling images. **AGB**

One of the original stark renderings that won MOS the P.S.1 commission.



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STUDIO VISIT > MOED DE ARMAS & SHANNON

545 MADISON AVENUE



350 WEST BROADWAY



The roughly 30-person financial district studio of Moed de Armas & Shannon (MdeAS) has revisited many modern masters, including Walter Gropius, Edward Durell Stone, and Gordon Bunshaft, among others. In addition to new construction, they've also been breathing new life into lesser-known buildings, such as recladding 1095 Madison, an office tower on Bryant Park, thereby helping developers revive aging real estate. They approach these projects with surgical precision, whether it's designing a new lobby or giving a building an entirely new skin.

Principals Leon Moed, Raul de Armas, and Dan Shannon are all SOM alums, and their commitment to simple, typically gridded forms reflects that firm's midcentury heyday. "We believe in clean, strong modernism," de Armas said. In their renovation projects, they tend to take a light hand. "We like to make things look like they've always been that way," added Moed. For example, the firm redesigned the lobby and plaza at Stone's General Motors Building, turning an overlooked outdoor space into a popular civic gathering place, where the Bohlin Cywinski Jackson-designed glass cube that forms the entrance to a subterranean Apple store blends seamlessly with the plaza.

The firm has redesigned numerous lobbies of office buildings, and they often pick one material, like marble, to wrap an entire space, creating a strong first impression for existing buildings. When recladding towers such as 1095 Madison Avenue, they design elegant new curtain walls, often increasing the amount of daylight inside.

The studio's new construction, while restrained, feels decidedly contemporary. Rectilinear geometries reflect the principals' modernist convictions, but the buildings are tightly knitted into the urban fabric. Residential and mixed-use projects have generous outdoor spaces, and many of their designs strive for high levels of sustainability. These are not architects on a midcentury nostalgia trip. **AGB**

545 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK

This Emery Roth & Sons building, completed in 1958, is getting a contemporary reskinning, but also a bit of reconstruction for developer ICOR. The previous skin featured wide ribbons of masonry and glass, with the structure's top tiers flared out on the long side of the building. MdeAS is straightening the geometry of the tower so that it steps back evenly. The new, all-glass curtain wall will also allow more daylight into the interior.

350 WEST BROADWAY
NEW YORK

This ten-story, 40,000-square-foot luxury condominium in Soho has a two-story base topped with a sprawling roof garden. A five-story midsection squares with the street wall, and a tower rises an additional five stories behind. Each unit has an outdoor space. Developed by RFR Realty, the project is expected to be complete by the end of the year, with MdeAS as the project's design architect, SLCE as architect of record, and interiors by William T. Georgis.

MIXED-USE PROJECT



200 PARK AVENUE



GOTHAM CENTER
MASTERPLAN AND
TOWER



COURTESY MDEAS

MIXED-USE PROJECT
PHILADELPHIA

Located in Philadelphia's Center City, this 10,000-square-foot, mixed-use building will have a high-performance curtain wall and a green roof. The building combines ground-floor retail with gallery and office spaces above, both of which have outdoor access. The architects are also hoping to bring the outdoors in with a tree inset behind the curtain wall at the corner of the top two floors. With its quiet but layered relationships between exterior and interior, the midrise building shows MdeAS' careful consideration of urban conditions.

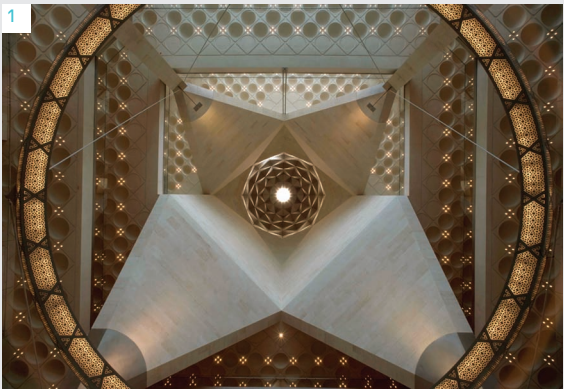
200 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK

Designed by Walter Gropius and Emery Roth & Sons, 200 Park Avenue, better known as the MetLife Building, was looking run-down. Tishman Speyer asked MdeAS to design new storefronts and a lighting scheme for the arcade, as well as to replace the terrazzo and create a new double-height entrance at Vanderbilt Avenue and 45th Street. MdeAS used substantial materials including bronze storefronts and travertine for the entrance that could stand up to the scale of the massive structure and bring a new sense of luxury to the building.

GOTHAM CENTER MASTERPLAN
AND TOWER
LONG ISLAND CITY, QUEENS

Principals de Armas and Moed worked on the Citicorp complex in Long Island City while at SOM, so their masterplan for the Gotham Center is a homecoming of sorts. Developed for Tishman Speyer, the plan calls for four towers, totaling 3.5 million square feet atop a retail base, which will serve as a gateway to Long Island City from Queens Plaza. The towers have right-angled outer facades and elliptical walls where they face one another. The first office tower recently broke ground.

HONORS



This spring proved busy for awards programs in architecture, urban placemaking, and lighting design, and *AN* here presents three of the latest accolades and their honorees.

First, the New York Council of the **Society of American Registered Architects (SARA/NY)** announced the winners of this year's 14th annual **Design Awards**. The 2009 Medallion of Honor went to **Friends of the High Line** for not only preserving a historic New York City railbed redesigned by James Corner Field Operations and Diller Scofidio + Renfro—but also for creating “a new place where the city's cultural and social riches may be experienced amidst birds, rather than buses,” the society said.

The 2009 Project of the Year award went to One Bryant Park, the LEED Platinum office building at 42nd Street and 6th Avenue designed by **Cook + Fox Architects** and developed by The Durst Organization. Cooper Union's new Academic Building collected the 2009 Visionary Architecture Award. Designed by **Morphosis** and built by Sciam Construction, the build-

ing was commended for its innovative use of materials and technology. Awards of Excellence, Merit, and Honor were also conferred in a variety of categories; the full list of winners can be found at www.sarany.org.

Next, the **Bruner Foundation** presented the 2009 winners of the **Rudy Bruner Award**, established in 1986 to promote innovative thinking about urban architecture and its role in the built environment. Inner-City Arts in Los Angeles, designed by **Michael Maltzan Architecture**, was named the Gold Medal winner, taking home the \$50,000 prize. Silver Medal winners, which were each awarded \$10,000, were the Community Chalkboard in Charlottesville, Virginia, designed by **Peter O'Shea of Siteworks Studio** with **Robert Winstead**; Hunts Point Riverside Park in the Bronx, designed by New York City Parks Department project managers **Nancy Prince** and **George Bloomer** and engineer **Ahamad Baksh**; Millennium Park in Chicago, by **Ed Uhlig, SOM**, and others; and St. Joseph Rebuild Center in New Orleans, by the **Detroit Collaborative Design Center** and **Wayne Troyer Architects**.


- 1 **Museum of Islamic Arts, Doha, Qatar**
- 2 **St. Joseph Rebuild Center, New Orleans**
- 3 **The High Line, New York**

And in June, the **Illuminating Engineering Society's** New York City Section held its annual gala at the Chelsea Piers to honor the 2009 **Lumen Awards** winners. The Lumen Award of Excellence—the highest level of recognition for a permanent architectural application—went to I.M. Pei's Museum of Islamic Arts in Doha, Qatar, with lighting design by **Fisher Marantz Stone**. The Vera Wang Flagship store in New York City, with lighting by **Tillotson Design Associates**, was awarded the Feltman Award, recognizing excellence in retail merchandising lighting. The Olafur Eliasson Waterfalls art installation, which transformed New York City last summer, received the Lumen Citation for Technical Lighting Achievement, with lighting design by **Jaros, Baum & Bolles**. For the full list of awards and citations, as well as images of the projects in each category, see www.iesnyc.org.

VICTORIA MONJO

1: SAMI S. MATAR AND MORLEY VON STERNBERG; 2: BRUNER FOUNDATION; 3: IWAN BAAH

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CASEY AT BAT continued from front page
firm he launched with Cranbrook Academy of Art and Museum director Reed Kroloff in 2005—and begin work at the GSA in August, pending a routine security review. GSA Chief Architect Les Shepherd declined to comment on his new employee, citing federal guidelines forbidding discussion of new hires until they enter office.

Jones' selection comes at a critical moment. After years of high-profile projects, Design Excellence has been quiet of late due to budget constraints, prompting rumors that the GSA would shutter the program. By choosing Jones, a young but well-respected figure in the architecture world, GSA sends a clear indication to the contrary.

"I would say that this is a very good sign," said Morphosis principal Thom Mayne, who has designed several award-winning buildings for the GSA and recommended Jones for the post. "It tells me that the government is taking this effort seriously and that we will have much good work coming in the future from the GSA."

As head of Design Excellence, Jones, 43, will oversee the architect selection and design process for the GSA, one of the nation's largest development organizations, responsible for building and maintaining everything from border stations to federal

courthouses. He will also direct the GSA's Art in Architecture Program, which requires all new buildings and major modernizations to dedicate 0.5 percent of their construction budgets to artwork for the facility.

Created by former GSA Chief Architect Ed Feiner in 1994 as a way to improve the quality of federal buildings, Design Excellence relies on rotating committees of architects and planners to advise on selecting architects and guiding their designs.

Jones is no stranger to the organization. After helping reorganize New York's Van Alen Institute in the late 1990s, he worked at Design Excellence from 2001 to 2005, where, among other tasks, he ran the First Impressions program, which developed guidelines for mitigating the visual impact of post-September 11 security alterations on federal structures.

Feiner, now a principal in Perkins+Will's Washington, D.C. office, was likewise bullish on Jones. "He's very thoughtful, very sensitive to design issues and to working with people," he said. "He works extremely well with designers as an advocate for design, and he's very good at constructive critique, which is part of that responsibility. He knows the people in the architectural profession extremely well, and that's an art in itself."

CLAY RISEN

AT DEADLINE

WELCOME HOME

After Lee Sander stepped down as MTA chief in May, many transit advocates worried that Governor David Paterson would struggle to replace such a talented planner and bureaucrat. But on July 14, Paterson announced the appointment of Jay Walder, a veteran of the MTA's dark days and the man responsible for reshaping London's transit network. Joining the MTA in 1983 after graduating from Harvard's Kennedy school, Walder rose through the ranks to become chief financial officer, playing an instrumental role with then-director Richard Ravitch in creating and implementing the agency's first capital plans.

TROUBLE FOR CHIOFARO

In May, Boston developer Don Chiofaro's plans for a twin-tower complex on the harbor designed by KPF were derided by many as outsized as his notorious ego. Chiofaro appears to be playing to form, as the state's environmental administrator declared on July 17 that the 59-story office tower and 40-story residential tower—which are joined in the middle by an iconic, 770-foot arch—is now seeking variances well outside what's legally permissible. (Current zoning allows for a building reaching a maximum of 155 feet.) Chiofaro, however, has vowed to fight on at both the state and city levels.

GEHRY WEST 8'6ED

To design the new, 2.5-acre Lincoln Park in Miami Beach, West 8 beat out a dozen other firms, including Frank Gehry—the architect of a concert hall for the city's New World Symphony that will be surrounded by the park. Gehry was initially set to also build the park, but when his fees ballooned to more than a third of the \$13 million budget, according to the *Miami Herald*, the contract was nixed and a new designer sought. On July 16, the commission was re-awarded to West 8, and the firm is doing the work at half the price.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

After decades of recognition for her work in support of real-life-scale urbanism, Jane Jacobs, who died in 2006, is getting her due in the Greenwich Village she helped to make famous. The city has named the block of Hudson Street in front of her old house at 555 Hudson "Jane Jacobs Way." Assorted admirers, including Council Speaker Christine Quinn and Landmarks Preservation Commission Chair Robert Tierney, unveiled the new street sign, between West 11th and Perry streets, on July 13. Meanwhile, a week later in Chicago, the Sears Tower shed its name of 36 years when it was redubbed the Willis Tower, part of a naming agreement reached by the British insurance broker, which recently inked a deal to lease 140,000 square feet in the SOM-designed building. Sears Roebuck, the tower's original tenant and namesake, moved out in 1992.

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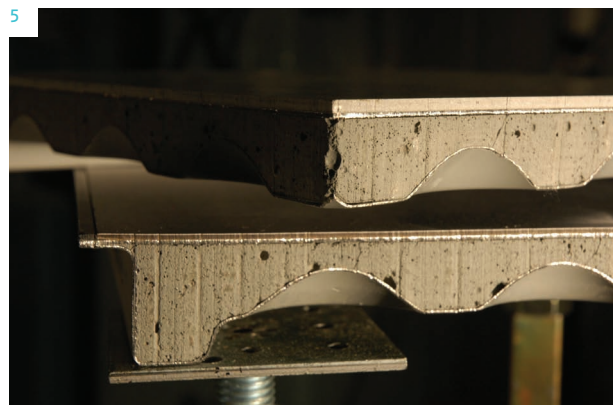
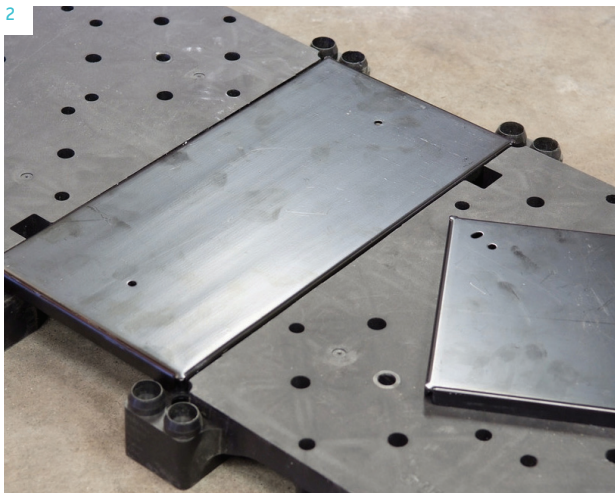
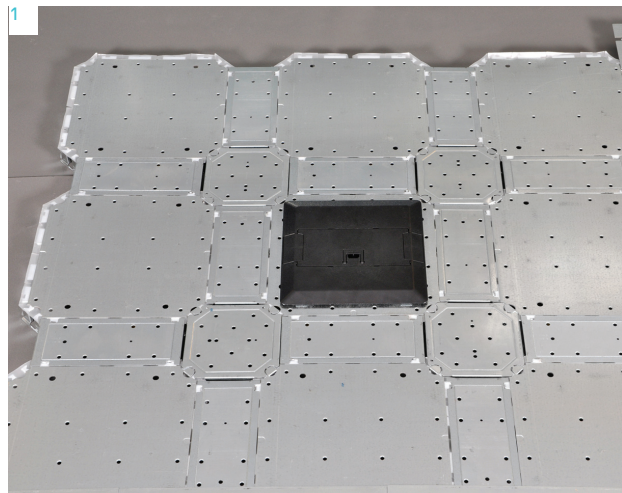
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FLOORED

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BY JULIA GALEF

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www.freeaxe.com

2 AFC MAXI FLOOR SYSTEM
ACCESS FLOOR CORP

A flexible new flooring system from Access Floor Corp makes for quick and easy redesigns. Only two inches high, the Maxi Floor System snaps together over an existing hard surface using no special tools or adhesives, and works with any non-load-bearing wall. Square polypropylene panels support the floor's weight—holding up to 1,500 pounds per square inch—and are connected by additional panels of cold-rolled, galvanized steel. Power and data cables travel freely through the space underneath, allowing total flexibility in layout and access.
www.accessfloorcorp.com

3 TECCRETE
HAWORTH

The Haworth Design & Engineering team positions itself as a leader in the sustainable design of access floors, with a new concrete-and-steel composite structure of 58 percent-recycled content, the highest in the market. TecCrete's exposed concrete surface works with a wide range of coverings or can be left bare, stained in patterns, or turned into a base for a reflecting pool. Solid as it gets, TecCrete flexes 50 percent less in reaction to a person's step than an ordinary steel access panel.
www.haworth.com

4 VERSADJUST ADJUSTABLE DECK SUPPORTS
BISON DECK SUPPORTS

Solutions for providing power and telecom capabilities outdoors have lagged behind demand, but Bison Deck Supports advances the field with a new series of high-strength pedestals that create raised decks on any structural surface. Industrial strength (bearing up to 1,500 pounds) and resistant to water, mold, and freeze-thaw, these adjustable supports create two feet of space for a system of cables to snake beneath the deck, supplying power in all kinds of weather.
www.bisondecksupports.com

5 CONCRETE CORE STEEL PANELS FLOORING
ACCESS FLOOR CORP

A seemingly delicate new design from Access Floor Corp actually bears up to 6,000 lbs., making for one of the strongest panels in the industry. The Concrete Core Steel access-floor system's brawn is due to a honeycomb of steel-encased concrete on its underside, which gives the raised system the solid feel and acoustics of a structural concrete floor. The floor panels are finished with a coating of epoxy paint and can be covered with materials ranging from vinyl to hardwood to cork.
www.accessfloorcorp.com

6 UNDERFLOOR SERVICE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM
TATE ACCESS FLOORS

At this year's NeoCon, access-flooring company Tate rolled out four new styles of hardwood tile to complement their popular line of Concore floor panels. A natural wood laminate (3mm) over a Versacore wood veneer backer (11mm) affixes to panels of a highly controlled cement mix encased in a shell of stamped and welded steel. The rigid, solid hardwood panels combine the benefits of a concrete slab with the flexibility of modular floors, minimizing sound transmission and regulating airflow.
www.tateaccessfloors.com

COURTESY RESPECTIVE MANUFACTURERS

Foreclosed properties are marked with pink triangles on the Panorama of the City of New York for the *Red Lines Housing Crisis Learning Center*, on view at the Queens Museum of Art through September 27.



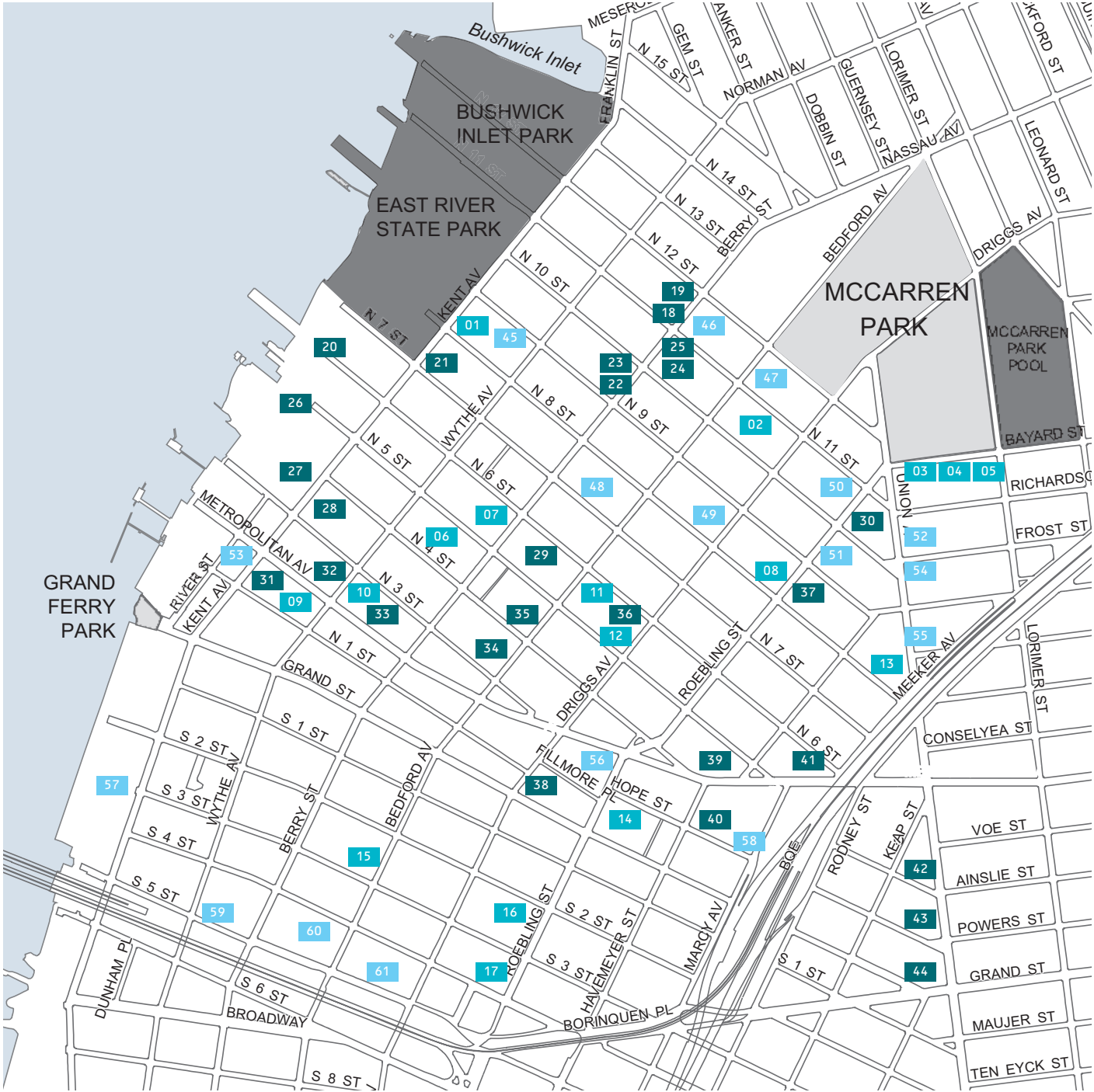
COURTESY QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART

For the past four years, *AN* has dedicated this summer issue to a grid of escalating private development projects rising throughout most of New York's boroughs. The idea was to provide a snapshot of the city in transformation and a sense of the evolving skyline. Change can't always be about growth, and this year seemed right for a more fine-grained approach. This Developer's Issue takes a close look at four neighborhoods, all in transition, and all grappling with the consequences of ambitious plans amid harsh economic realities. The news isn't by any means all grim: A slower pace in some cases has translated into more innovative thinking; overly aggrandized projects have been dialed back to more appropriate scales; and collaborative partnerships—whether in financing or planning—have replaced blood-sport competition. We hope you'll agree: Development has never been so interesting.

Produced by Alan G. Brake, Jeff Byles, Jennifer Krichels,
and Aaron Seward
Location photography by Victoria Monjo

ON THE SPOT

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER JULY 29, 2009



WILLIAMS -BURG

COMPLETED

- 1 North8, 49 North 8th St.
- 2 Lucent, 170 North 11th St.
- 3 20 Bayard St.
- 4 The Aurora, 30 Bayard St.
- 5 Ikon, 50 Bayard St.
- 6 Ninety North Fifth, 90 North 5th St.
- 7 NV, 101 North 5th St.
- 8 Sophia Lofts, 234 North 9th St.
- 9 80 Metropolitan Ave.
- 10 100 N3 Lofts, 100 North 3rd St.
- 11 The Rialto, 150 North 5th St.
- 12 nforth, 161 North 4th St.
- 13 525 Union Ave.
- 14 14 Hope St.
- 15 342 Bedford Ave.
- 16 196 South 2nd St.
- 17 185 South 4th St.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

- 18 40 Berry St.
- 19 44 Berry St.
- 20 The Edge
- 21 111 Kent Ave.
- 22 Mason Fisk, 72 Berry St.
- 23 70 Berry St.
- 24 125 North 10th St.
- 25 Berry Street Lofts, 55 Berry St.
- 26 Northside Piers
- 27 Austin Nichols Warehouse, 184 Kent Ave.
- 28 173 Kent Ave.
- 29 Urban Green, 142 North 6th St.
- 30 5 Roebling St.
- 31 54 Metropolitan Ave.
- 32 268 Wythe Ave.
- 33 Metropolitan Cinema and Apartments, 136 Metropolitan Ave.
- 34 252 Bedford Ave.
- 35 233 Bedford Ave.
- 36 170 North 5th St.
- 37 229 North 8th St.
- 38 277 Grand St.
- 39 349 Metropolitan Ave.
- 40 99 Hope St.
- 41 439 Metropolitan Ave.
- 42 405 Union Ave.
- 43 385 Union Ave.
- 44 365 Union Ave.

STALLED

- 45 Wythe Avenue Lofts, 70 North 9th Street
- 46 150 North 12th St.
- 47 95 Bedford Ave.
- 48 144 North 8th St.
- 49 510 Driggs Ave.
- 50 Warehouse 11, 214 N. 11th St.
- 51 212-218 North 9th St.
- 52 McCarren Park Estates, Union Ave. and Richardson St.
- 53 234 Kent Ave.
- 54 544 Union Ave.
- 55 538 Union Ave.
- 56 308 Metropolitan Ave.
- 57 Domino Sugar Refinery
- 58 53 Hope St.
- 59 373 Wythe Ave.
- 60 120 South 4th St.
- 61 146 South 4th St.

PARKS IN CONSTRUCTION

EXISTING PARKS



Pilings in empty lots behind dilapidated chain-link fences. Foundation pits filled with rainwater. Steel frames of five-story condos rusting, with no sign of further construction in sight. A walk around Williamsburg, Brooklyn is enough to tell you that its future is on hold.

According to a recent report by the New York City Department of Buildings, there are currently 18 stalled construction projects racking up citations and blighting the landscape of this North Brooklyn neighborhood and its sister district, Greenpoint. The view from the street, however, suggests that the number is much higher.

This signals a significant turnaround for the development hotspot. As recently as 2008, the picture was sunnier. The hip neighborhood, once the province of artists and students, was beginning to draw a larger contingent of families. The waterfront—an industrial landscape of garbage transfer sites and warehouses—was being transformed into a green swath by the opening of East River State Park and the city's soon-to-come Bushwick Inlet Park. The future seemed wide open for continued growth.

A quick look at the numbers gives an immediate sense of the optimism that once imbued the area, as well as how much that optimism has faded. According to Aptsandlofts.com, a residential real estate broker, 2,818 new apartments will hit the

Williamsburg market by the end of this year. Next year, the brokerage expects that number to hold, with 2,766 new apartments coming on line. According to real estate appraiser Miller Samuel, in 2008, buildings in Williamsburg and Greenpoint were selling for an all-time high of \$668 per square foot on average. But in the first quarter of 2009, the average price had fallen to \$519, a number likely to fall further.

The future of the waterfront is also in question. The State Parks Department cut its funding for East River State Park from \$169.1 million to \$112.1 million earlier this summer, and the New York City Parks Department cut its budget by \$57 million, most of which was earmarked for Bushwick Inlet Park.

One thing making the downturn harder on North Brooklyn than on other parts of the city is its high concentration of new construction, said Miller Samuel CEO Jonathan Miller. Formerly a light industrial zone, the neighborhood has been deluged with residential units. In the last two years, new buildings have accounted for 75 to 85 percent of all sales in Williamsburg and Greenpoint, he said.

The problem starts with banks. A new rule prohibits Fannie Mae from guaranteeing mortgages for units in buildings that haven't sold 70 percent of their units. And because Fannie Mae considers New York to be a real estate market in decline, that number goes

up to 75 percent. With banks scrambling for their own survival, few are willing to take risks, especially on real estate. For new buildings, in particular larger developments like the Northside Piers or The Edge, reaching that figure is an increasingly daunting task.

As a result, smaller, better-funded buildings are still selling well, said Leah Ellis, an associate at Kutnicki Bernstein Architects. But many of the big buildings with over 100 units are struggling, she added, and developers are getting nervous.

The banks play another role in the woes faced by North Brooklyn developers. Architect Karl Fischer, whose firm has designed many of the modern condominiums that typify recent development in the neighborhood, said that one distinguishing characteristic of the Williamsburg real estate market is that many of its developers are not established or capitalized enough to withstand the downturn. First, they get squeezed by the banks, and then they paint themselves into a corner where they lose control of the property to banks that refuse to lower unit prices to sell.

In a sea of price cuts, no building illustrates this nightmare scenario as well as Warehouse 11, a Karl Fischer-designed, 120-unit development on Roebling Street. Construction on Warehouse 11 is 95 percent complete, and it's in foreclosure, with the developer owing \$50,766,000. The bank has pulled all sales

listings for the individual units, and in May hired brokerage Massey Knakal to sell off the building's senior debt. Massey estimates that the building's potential gross annual rental income could be as high as \$4.1 million.

With sales heading for a dip as low as \$350 per square foot, developers and their architects are resorting to survival tactics, from rethinking the finishing touches to buying cut-rate treadmills for the fitness room. Many buildings have already gone from being condos to offering some or all of their units as rentals, Ellis said. Some developers are also retooling their condominiums as dormitories or eldercare facilities. In one luxury condo in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, a desperate developer went one step further, renting out the unsold units in his building to the city as housing for homeless families. While that's an extreme example, it's clear to most developers holding unsold units in Williamsburg that something has to give.

COLIN DODDS IS A JOURNALIST, EDITOR, AND AUTHOR CURRENTLY RESIDING IN BROOKLYN.

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER JULY 29, 2009



MIDTOWN WEST

COMPLETED

- 1 Chatham 44, 464 West 44th St.
- 2 River Place, 1 River Pl.
- 3 Atelier Condos, 635 West 42nd St.
- 4 Silver Towers, 600 West 42nd St.
- 5 Orion Condominiums, 350 West 42nd St.
- 6 337-343 West 39th St.
- 7 455 West 37th St.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

- 8 Eleven Times Square, 42nd St. and 8th Ave.
- 9 505 West 37th St.
- 10 Tower 37, 346 West 37th St.
- 11 316 11th Ave.

PLANNED

- 12 605 West 42nd St.
- 13 440 West 42nd St.
- 14 Port Authority expansion, 641 8th Ave.
- 15 Jacob K. Javits Center expansion, 39th-40th Sts. between 11th and 12th Aves.
- 16 Galerie 515 Hotel & Condominium Residences, 511-521 9th Ave.
- 17 11th Ave., 36th-37th Sts.
- 18 Javits Convention Center Hotel, 11th Ave. between 35th and 36th Sts.
- 19 450 Hudson Blvd.
- 20 3 Hudson Blvd.
- 21 10th Ave., 34th-35th Sts.
- 22 World Product Centre, 555 West 33rd St.
- 23 33rd St. between 9th and 10th Aves.
- 24 Moynihan Station, 425 8th Ave.
- 25 Madison Square Garden expansion, 4 Pennsylvania Plz.
- 26 356-358 10th Ave.

PLANNED PARKS

EXISTING PARKS

HIGH LINE SECTION 2

HIGH LINE SECTION 3

HUDSON BOULEVARD

NO. 7 SUBWAY EXTENSION



The city may call it Midtown West, but the corner of 8th Avenue and 41st Street certainly doesn't feel like Midtown. The monochromatic New York Times tower has nothing in common with the lights of 42nd Street, and the new Eleven Times Square, with its relatively rectilinear offices atop layers of scrolling screens, has nothing in common with the Port Authority, which has spawned a brand-name, low-price hotel district just to its south, where McSam and the Lam Group have squeezed shiny buildings onto narrow tenement lots. And that's only one clash of cultures between the titans in this so-called neighborhood.

One can still happen upon charming, low-rise residential streets like West 44th, properly known as Hell's Kitchen, where the Actors Studio keeps company with home store Domus, and the new construction is the modestly scaled, rather elegant Chatham 44. Another pocket of old-fashioned residential exists south of the Farley Post Office on West 30th Street. These streets are anomalies amid the transportation no-man's-land imposed by railroad tracks, tunnel ramps, and bus station access. Today they are the last holdouts in an above-ground landscape rapidly undergoing transformation, as the march of luxury residential towers like River Place, Atelier, and now Silver Towers heads across 42nd to the river, buffered by huge commercial assemblages from Extell and Moinian opposite the Javits Center. At least, that was the plan until last fall. Now action has all but halted and will likely remain that way until the No. 7 train extension to 34th Street is more than its current hole in the ground.

The city's vision for the area, embodied in

the 2005 Hudson Yards rezoning text, centers on a brand-new Park Avenue called Hudson Boulevard, which slices the long blocks between 10th and 11th from 33rd to 39th streets. Originally intended as the pompous lead-up to the West Side Stadium, its new role is to create focus and amenity for a future row of green office buildings on its west side, and residential towers to the east and north. The first three blocks, 33rd to 36th, are scheduled to open in 2013, when No. 7 riders could exit a Toshiko Mori teardrop-shaped station at the base of the park-slash-boulevard to be designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA). There are two LEED-certified office buildings in development, Extell's World Product Centre and Moinian's 3 Hudson Boulevard, that would open at the same time if both financing and tenants appear.

But Anna Hayes Levin, current chair of the Hudson Yards Community Advisory Committee (HYCAC), doesn't think the boulevard of skyscrapers could or should happen. "It is a very unlikely place for commercial development," she said. "Hudson Boulevard is a boulevard to nowhere—it only goes to 39th Street, into the maw of the Lincoln Tunnel. A better way to increase green space in the area would be to build a series of linked parks in the through-block open spaces over the Amtrak train cut. That way you would get a more organic, neighborhoody feeling."

Right now, construction in the area is all rentals, including a 34-story High Line-adjacent tower at 316 11th by Douglaston Development, and two Rockrose projects at 37th and 10th. Earlier this year 455 West 37th was leased, and the two linked towers on the west side of the street should be ready in

spring 2010. "The timing is not great for it," admitted Rockrose director of planning John McMillan, "but no one else is building, so there will not be much else online when it's completed. To establish a new neighborhood takes housing." They chose this particular intersection because of proximity to the Baryshnikov Arts Center at 37 ARTS and a large loft building on 37th, since those projects "established a residential bulkhead." A similar bulkhead may be established when the northern section of the High Line opens in 2010, linking Chelsea to Midtown. Community Board 4 is also working to rezone 11th Avenue north of 42nd Street for residential use, extending Hell's Kitchen west onto a street of auto dealerships.

With zero demand for new office space in Midtown and vacancies at a ten-year high, Moinian director of development Oskar Brecher says his company is in negotiations (and potentially litigation) with the city about starting the small residential portion of their Hudson Boulevard site in advance. Like Brecher, architect-developer Jared Della Valle of Alloy LLC, which owns a mid-block site between 35th and 36th streets, bemoaned the Hudson Yards rezoning for coupling residential and commercial development. "The city has the perspective that this is a 30-year plan, and that it will fill in the way they envisioned it," said Della Valle. In the meantime, he suggests cultural organizations should come up with interim uses (outdoor movies? Serra sculptures?) for all those fallow lots.

Then there's the biggest site, the Hudson rail yards. Construction on the eastern yard could start anytime (once Related signs a contract with the MTA), with buildings ready

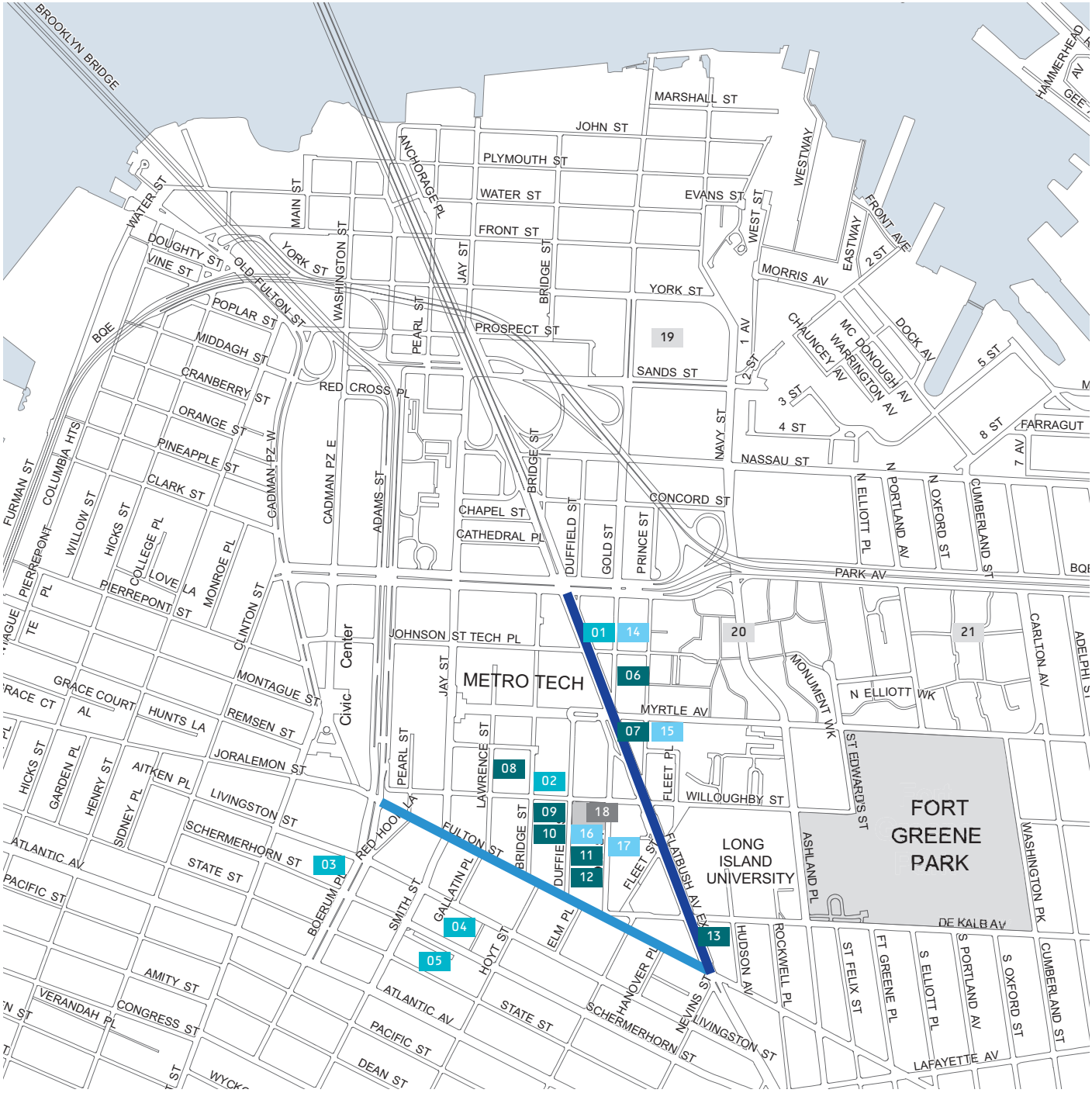
in 2015, but now is clearly not that time.

The company has a new plan—released this spring as part of the ULURP review for the site—designed by KPF with MVVA as landscape architect, that has received favorable reviews from the community for putting streets back in the superblock and breaking the open space into smaller, more purposeful parks. But what's a park, even one at the end of the (probably) retained High Line, if it's shadowed by 50-story towers? Because the floor area ratios for Hudson Yards are being calculated across the entire site, which includes ten acres of open space, the buildings can be much taller than those on a typical city site with a FAR of 10. "It makes sense to have a high-density corridor between 30th and 34th streets, around Penn Station, and then extending west at diminished densities," said HYCAC's Levin.

The community advisory group's other major concern is giving a single developer power over such a large chunk of the city. Regional Planning Association president Robert Yaro expressed the same fear and suggested a solution in a recent interview: If the city wants to be involved in the planning, let them set up an authority like the one that has run Battery Park City. That way, the streets and parks would be owned by the city, which would also have the ability to sell development parcels over time, reacting to the city's changing needs. Related, instead, has to plan today for what New York buildings might be needed in 2015, 2020, or never.

ALEXANDRA LANGE IS A JOURNALIST, ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN, AND TEACHER BASED IN BROOKLYN.

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER JULY 29, 2009



COMPLETED

- 1 Oro, 306 Gold St.
- 2 Belltel Lofts, 365 Bridge St.
- 3 110 Livingston St.
- 4 be@Schermerhorn, 189 Schermerhorn St.
- 5 Schermerhorn House, 160 Schermerhorn St.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

- 6 Avalon Fort Greene, 343 Gold St.
- 7 Toren, 325 Gold St.
- 8 111 Lawrence St.
- 9 Aloft Hotel, 222 Duffield St.
- 10 Sheraton Brooklyn, 228 Duffield St.
- 11 V3 Hotel, 231 Duffield St.
- 12 Hotel Indigo, 237 Duffield St.
- 13 80 Dekalb Ave.

PLANNED

- 14 Hotel Site
- 15 Red Apple Development Group, residential/supermarket/drugstore site, 219 Myrtle Ave.
- 16 Abolitionist Memorial, 227 Duffield St.
- 17 City Point, bounded by Willoughby, Fleet, and Gold streets and DeKalb Ave.

PLANNED PARK

- 18 Willoughby Square Park

EXISTING PARK / PUBLIC HOUSING

- 19 Farragut Houses
- 20 Ingersoll Houses
- 21 Walt Whitman Houses

FULTON STREETSCAPE (UNDER CONSTRUCTION)

FLATBUSH STREETSCAPE (PLANNED)

DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN



When Harry Rosen opened Junior's in 1950, the Dodgers still played at Ebbets Field and Brooklyn was in its heyday. The restaurant's Flatbush Avenue neighbors included the Paramount and Fox theaters, where Brooklynites could hear Duke Ellington or, a few years later, Chuck Berry. Downtown was a real neighborhood, said Joe Chan, executive director of the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership (DBP), and the recent wave of development—no matter how chaotic in appearance—aims to make it one again.

The intervening decades saw the area along Flatbush decline into automotive uses and an uninviting barrier condition. In 2004, the non-profit DBP and the commercial and academic stakeholders it represents, along with relevant city agencies, saw the area's rezoning as a chance to recapture that history with residents, jobs, entertainment, diverse retail, and 24/7 street life. "It should have all the elements of economic sustainability," said Chan, who spent five years as City Hall's point person for the rezoning. The plan also incorporated PlaNYC's principles for greening public space and guiding density toward transit nodes.

Before the bubble burst in 2008, the on-the-ground reality along Flatbush, however, was hyper-development, particularly in the condominium sector, and a jarring degree of gentrification. Major projects include the 42-story Avalon Fort Greene at Myrtle and

Flatbush, a rental building by Perkins Eastman Architects now under construction; BFC Partners' 37-story Toren by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's Roger Duffy at the same intersection; Ismael Leyva's 40-story Gold Street tower, Oro; and 80 DeKalb, a 34-story 80/20 by Costas Kondylis for Forest City Ratner. Downtown residential construction includes some 20 fully funded projects in all.

But sales have lagged behind expectations, and some new construction is now "trending toward rental," said Chan, "for those that were still in the planning phases before the credit markets really took a turn." Toren, as of this writing, is 50 percent sold; Oro, 40 percent. Developers who "in the past were negotiating with big boxes," said councilperson Letitia James, an advocate of affordable housing and local employment, are instead considering day-care centers and schools, perhaps even quartering students from downtown's seven higher-educational institutions. In fact, last year's economic reality check may end up steering development patterns away from drastic gentrification and closer to a more inclusive community vision.

The DBP's Downtown Brooklyn Plan allows FARs of 10 or 12 south of MetroTech (increased from 6) along Flatbush to a jigsaw border including Boerum Place and Adams, Jay, and Smith streets. The ensuing densification counterbalances the 2007 downzoning

in the brownstone districts of Fort Greene and Clinton Hill. The City Point mixed-use complex would replace Albee Square Mall with residences, retail, offices, and possibly a hotel, although construction is stalled, and reports of a 65-story skyscraper by Atlanta-based architect GreenbergFarrow appear premature. "The only part of City Point that will go forward is the affordable housing at this point," James reports, "and that's still in discussion."

On Duffield Street, all but one of several buildings thought to have served as abolitionist safe houses have fallen under eminent domain. Depending on fundraising, the remaining house at 227 Duffield will become an Underground Railroad museum surrounded by new development, including four hotels ranging from a 130-room V3 boutique to a 320-room Sheraton.

Much of the area's physical and social healing depends on whether Flatbush continues to resemble a highway or evolves toward a boulevard with development that "knits neighborhoods together," according to SOM's Duffy. Flatbush needs to be "less of an edge, more of a permeable condition between pre-existing neighborhoods." Noting how vehicles and the "defensive" MetroTech buildings combine to separate Fort Greene from downtown, Duffy looks to design as well as programming for reintegration. Toren, with its dimpled facade of Argentine aluminum panels painted

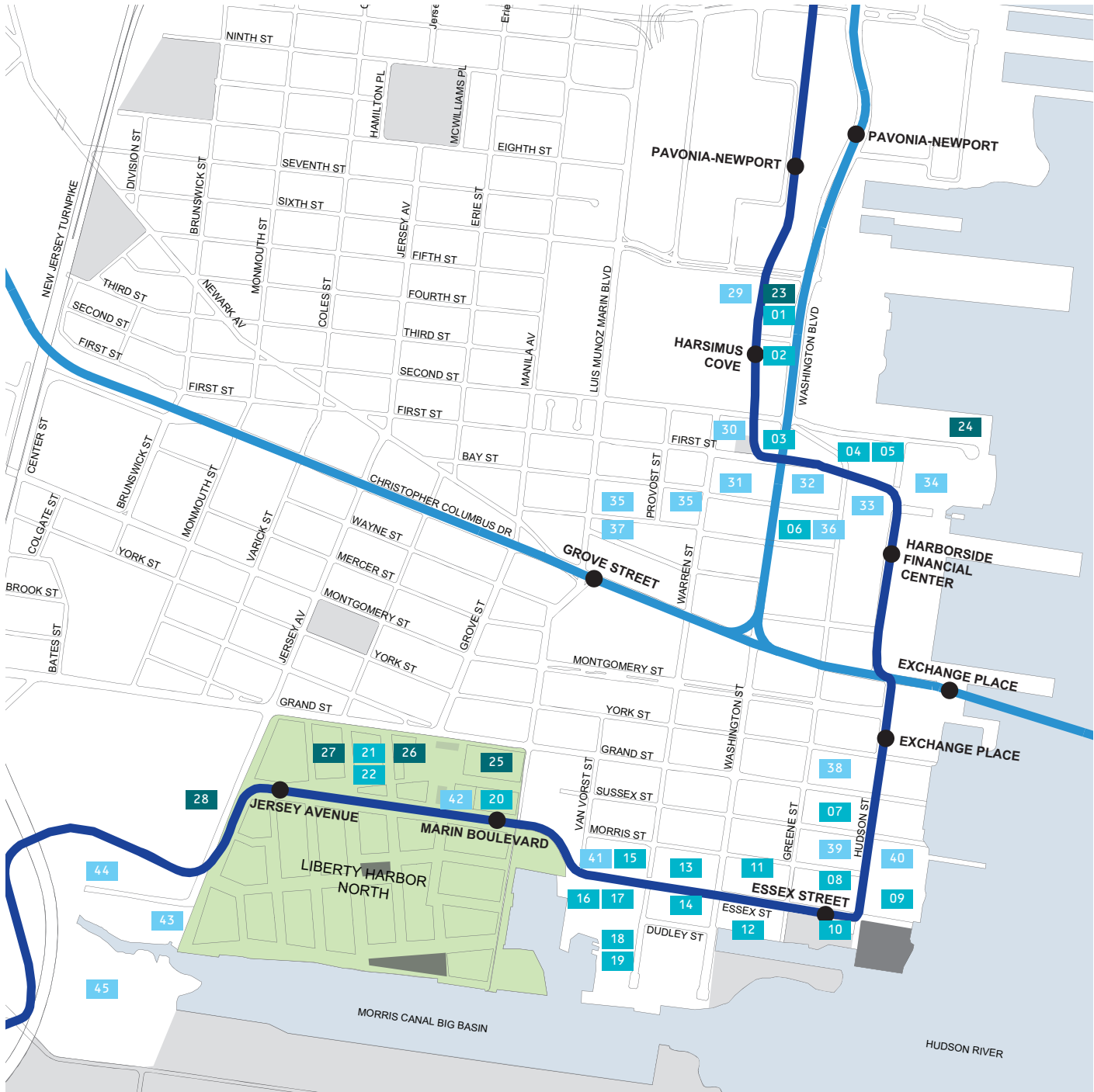
powder-coat silver, stands out from the area's dominant masonry styles; at ground level, its facade "was meant to foster transparent activity at the street edge," he said.

Schermerhorn House, designed by Susan Rodriguez and Polshek Partnership for a publicly-owned site near Hoyt-Schermerhorn station, is an intriguing exception to the high-rise activity, performing a comparably mediating function on a 12-story structure. With a glass-tower design that Rodriguez describes as having two distinct faces—one reflecting Downtown Brooklyn's larger scale, and the other stepping down to the brownstones of Boerum Hill—this multipurpose project spearheaded by Common Ground Community and Actors Fund of America includes studio units for special-needs populations like the formerly homeless, artists, and other low-income residents.

Downtown's near future may look less glittering than developers had hoped, but for some that's a relief. "As far as I'm concerned, we're not trying to create a new city," said James. "What we're trying to do is improve on that which we have and create opportunities for residents who have lived through the bad times and want to benefit from the good times."

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER JULY 29, 2009



JERSEY CITY

COMPLETED

- 1 Doubletree, 455 Washington Blvd.
- 2 Marbella, 425 Washington Blvd.
- 3 A Condominiums
389 Washington St.
- 4 Portofino, 1 Second St.
- 5 Candlewood Suites, 21 Second St.
- 6 Trump Plaza I, 342 Washington St.
- 7 77 Hudson St.
- 8 Liberty Towers, 33 Hudson St.
- 9 Goldman Sachs, 30 Hudson St.
- 10 Liberty Terrace, 25 Hudson St.
- 11 60 Essex St.
- 12 Sugar House, 174 Washington St.
- 13 The Windsor, 115 Morris St.
- 14 100 Dudley St.
- 15 187 Warren St.
- 16 Fulton's Landing, 149 Essex St.
- 17 Liberty View, 126 Dudley St.
- 18 Hudson Point, 131 Dudley St.
- 19 Pier House, 15 Warren St.
- 20 Gull's Cove, 205 Marin Blvd.
- 21 Liberty Harbor North, Block 60.03
- 22 The Zenith, 88 Liberty View Dr.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

- 23 455 Washington Blvd.
- 24 Crystal Point, 2 Second St.
- 25 225 Grand St.
- 26 Liberty Harbor North, Block 60.04
- 27 Liberty Harbor North, Block 60.02
- 28 Jersey City Medical Center

PLANNED

- 29 396-420 Marin Blvd.
- 30 110 First St.
- 31 111 First St.
- 32 The Powerhouse
- 33 Harborside Plaza 6/7
- 34 Harborside Plaza 8/9
- 35 Provost Square, 143 Bay St.
- 36 Trump Plaza II, 342 Washington St.
- 37 Morgan Point
- 38 99 Hudson St.
- 39 55 Hudson St.
- 40 50 Hudson St.
- 41 198 Van Vorst St.
- 42 193 Marin Blvd. Phase II
- 43 33-39 Aetna St.
- 44 36-50 Aetna St.
- 45 The View, Mill Creek Ln.

PLANNED PARKS

EXISTING PARKS

PATH TRAIN

HUDSON-BERGEN LIGHT RAIL

LIBERTY HARBOR NORTH



The Jersey City waterfront, dubbed the Gold Coast when large corporations like Goldman Sachs started to open offices there, began sprouting towers in the 1980s on acres of former rail yards for the Jersey Central and Pennsylvania railroads. But in the past five years, the city has spawned a new wave of residential construction blocks from the Hudson River—with over 70 projects in the downtown core—reflecting a bid to turn this back-office annex of Wall Street into a bona-fide urban place. “We’re not just seeing a renaissance,” Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy boasted in 2007, announcing plans for a 52-story tower designed by Rem Koolhaas at 111 First Street, on the site of a former tobacco factory. “We’re building a new city.”

The real-estate bust has crimped the mayor’s ambitions—the Koolhaas site is dormant as Manhattan-based builders Athena Group and BLDG Management focus on an adjacent rental tower—but it has done little to halt Jersey City’s rising status as a laboratory of urban living. According to a recent city analysis, the current population of about 260,000 is expected to grow by more than 80 percent by 2050, and Jersey City stands to gain 80,330 residential units over the same period.

Hudson County has prepared for—and encouraged—this astounding growth by building the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail, which opened in 2000 and runs 20 miles from North

Bergen to Bayonne. In the process, the line has turned old rail yards, piers, and industrial sites into a showcase of smart growth whose transit-oriented principles have won broad-based support. “In order to make this north-south alignment of development work, it required a transit infrastructure,” said Martin Robins, former director of Rutgers’ Alan M. Vorhees Transportation Center and a key planner of the rail line. “Light rail captured the fancy of a lot of business interests and environmentalists. It’s a rare combination to bring those two groups together.”

The most obvious business interests have come in the form of developers clustered along the line. Indeed, a Rutgers University study of development around just seven of the system’s 23 stations found 10,000 new units valued at \$5.3 billion. One of the largest such projects is the 55-story, 444-unit Trump Plaza, directly abutting the Powerhouse Arts District with its warehouses and factories meant to serve as live/work buildings for artists. (A second Trump tower, to rise from a shared base, is currently on hold.) The drastic shift in scale seen in some of the new projects—notably three towers proposed by Toll Brothers on and around the site of the old Manischewitz factory—has been prompted by controversial exceptions to the lowrise zoning of the district, which is anchored by the 101-year-old Powerhouse, itself due for a \$90 million

redevelopment as an arts and entertainment destination by Baltimore-based Cordish Companies. Other towers along the line—like the Cetra/Ruddy-designed 77 Hudson Street, where condos have been selling for \$850 per square foot—have also boosted ridership. According to NJ Transit, weekday usage in late 2008 averaged 44,750 passenger trips, up 11.7 percent from the previous year.

By far the most intriguing project unlocked by the line, however, is Liberty Harbor North, now a seven-block, lowrise development southwest of downtown’s Corbusian living. Originally designed by New Urbanist firm Duany Plater-Zyberk (DPZ), and revised by Mario Gandelsonas and Diana Agrest, the 80-acre development presents an arresting sight. DPZ invited ten architects to design condominiums and apartment buildings with radically different elevations: Red-brick townhouses, 80s-style classicism, art deco curves, and glass-box modernism all jostle together. “People always say that New Urbanists are traditionalists,” said Duany of the stylistic mix. “We’re agnostic relative to style. We let the market decide.” More important, he added, is the density enabled by two light-rail stops in the development—taller buildings, 30 stories or more, haven’t been built yet—and the multilayered sense of urbanity. “We used the same block as the Manhattan block, which is 250 feet by 600 feet,” Duany said.

“They have the capacity of 20 or 30 buildings on a block, including some very tall ones.”

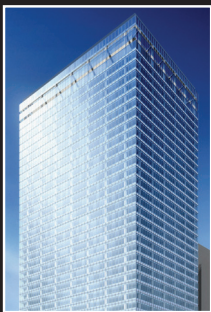
For developer Peter Mocco, the patchwork styles reflect the adjoining Van Vorst Park district’s mix of brownstones and infill construction. “We tried to represent visually all of the different styles,” Mocco said, “not necessarily trying to capture another time in Jersey City’s history, but being sensitive to its history. We are not attempting to create a Williamsburg,” Mocco added, referring to the replicant Colonial town in Virginia.

While there is little risk of this former industrial center ever having the staginess of that recreated colony, the new developments present a quirky hybrid of the suburb and the city. “Those look like New York City—style brownstones, but they wrap structured parking,” said Darius Sollohub, who directs the infrastructure planning program at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. “It’s a way to have urban living in a highly automobile-dependent environment.” In that sense, Liberty Harbor may be the most hopeful model yet for this half-finished city—a once highly urban center given new life from planned urbanism.

BROOKLYN-BASED WRITER ANGELA STARITA IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN. JEFF BYLES IS AN’S MANAGING EDITOR.

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JULY

WEDNESDAY 22

LECTURE

**The Global Polis,
Workshop 3:
Education Infrastructures**
7:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.aiany.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**Dorothy Iannone: Lioness
Emory Douglas:
Black Panther**
New Museum of
Contemporary Art
235 Bowery
www.newmuseum.org

THURSDAY 23

EVENTS

**AEC-NYC Professionals'
Circle Networking Group**
6:00 p.m.
Wise Construction
180 Varick St., Suite 512
www.aiany.org

**Open Studio: Peters Valley
presents Beth Ireland**
6:30 p.m.

Museum of Arts and Design
2 Columbus Circle
www.madmuseum.org

FRIDAY 24

EVENT

mfasummerfridays
Fridays in July and August
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Avenue of the Arts, Boston
www.mfa.org

SATURDAY 25

LECTURE

**Karin Alexis
Three Movements in
Architecture: Art Deco**
1:00 p.m.
National Building Museum
401 F St. NW,
Washington, D.C.
www.nbm.org

EVENT

**Warm Up: Alexi Delano,
Derek Plaslaiko, and
Elliot Sharp's Carbon**
2:00 p.m.
P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center
22-25 Jackson Ave.,
Long Island City
www.ps1.org

WITH THE KIDS

Mannahatta Family Workshop
2:00 p.m.
Museum of the
City of New York
1220 5th Ave.
www.mcny.org

TUESDAY 28

LECTURE

**Ivan Harbour
Green Community
International Design
Student Competition**
7:00 p.m.
National Building Museum
401 F St. NW,
Washington, D.C.
www.nbm.org

EXHIBITION OPENING

**Octavius Neveaux with
Blues Control
Local Flavor**
Cinders Gallery
103 Havemeyer St. #2,
Brooklyn
www.cindersgallery.com

EVENT

eVolo #1 Launch
7:00 p.m.
Storefront for Art and
Architecture
97 Kenmare St.
www.storefrontnews.org

WEDNESDAY 29

LECTURE

**Colum McCann
Let the Great World Spin**
6:30 p.m.
Tenement Museum
90 Orchard St.
www.tenement.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**ICA Collection: In the Making
Momentum 14:
Rodney McMillian**
Institute of Contemporary Art
100 Northern Ave., Boston
www.icaboston.org

EVENT

**Up the Hudson: 18th Annual
MAS Summer Boat Tour**
6:00 p.m.
Pier 83
42nd St. and 12th Ave.
www.mas.org

THURSDAY 30

LECTURES

**Teddy Cruz, Thomas Keenan
[Welcome to the USA]:
Architecture and Human
Rights at the Border**
6:30 p.m.
Van Alen Institute
30 West 22nd St., 6th Fl.
www.vanalen.org

LES Stories:

Tales from Little Italy
7:30 p.m.
Tenement Museum
90 Orchard St.
www.tenement.org

EVENT

Developers Forum
8:00 a.m.
Yale Club
50 Vanderbilt Ave.
www.pwcusa.org

AUGUST

SUNDAY 2

EXHIBITION OPENING

Ron Arad: No Discipline
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

FILM

Metalworkers
(Eduardo Coutinho, 2004),
84 min.
5:30 p.m.
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

WITH THE KIDS

Narrative in Art
2:00 p.m.
Museum of Arts and Design
2 Columbus Circle
www.madmuseum.org

TUESDAY 4

LECTURE

**Jane King Hession and
Debra Pickrel
Frank Lloyd Wright in
New York: The Plaza Years,
1954-1959**
6:30 p.m.
Skyscraper Museum
39 Battery Pl.
www.skyscraper.org

THURSDAY 6

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**Blok and Elisita Punto
Friendly Yoga**
Cinders Gallery
103 Havemeyer St. #2,
Brooklyn
www.cindersgallery.com

Cinnabar:

**The Chinese Art of
Carved Lacquer**
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

EVENT

Big Apple Bash
7:00 p.m.
Museum of the City of
New York
1220 5th Ave.
www.mcny.org

FRIDAY 7

EVENT

**Curator's Eye:
Frank Lloyd Wright**
2:00 p.m.
Solomon R. Guggenheim
Museum
1071 5th Ave.
www.guggenheim.org

SATURDAY 8

WITH THE KIDS

Building Ornaments
1:00 p.m.
Center for Architecture
536 LaGuardia Pl.
www.aiany.org

SUNDAY 9

WITH THE KIDS

Stories and Stitches
2:00 p.m.
Museum of Arts and Design
2 Columbus Circle
www.madmuseum.org

THURSDAY 13

EVENT

**AIA New Practices NY:
Urban A&O**
6:00 p.m.
Häfele
25 East 26th St.
www.hafele.com

SATURDAY 15

EXHIBITION OPENING

**Marcel Duchamp:
Étant donnés**
Philadelphia Museum of Art
26th St. and the
Benjamin Franklin Pkwy.,
Philadelphia
www.philamuseum.org

THURSDAY 20

EXHIBITION OPENING

Zane Lewis
Mixed Greens
531 West 26th St.
www.mixedgreens.com

SATURDAY 29

LECTURE

**Steven Evans
On Max Neuhaus**
12:45 p.m.
Dia:Beacon
3 Beekman St., Beacon
www.diaart.org

EVENT

Float
Through August 30
Socrates Sculpture Park
32-01 Vernon Blvd.,
Long Island City
www.socratessculpturepark.org

SEPTEMBER

SATURDAY 5

EXHIBITION OPENING

**Silk and Bamboo:
Music and Art of China**
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

THURSDAY 10

LECTURE

**Andrew Alpern
Rosario Candela:
An Immigrant Architect in
New York**
6:00 p.m.
John D. Calandra Italian
American Institute
25 West 43rd St., 17th Fl.
www.aiany.org

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**Peaceful Conquerors:
Jain Manuscript Painting
Vermeer's Masterpiece
The Milkmaid**
Metropolitan Museum of Art
1000 5th Ave.
www.metmuseum.org

FRIDAY 11

EXHIBITION OPENING

**William Blake's World:
"A New Heaven Is Begun"**
The Morgan Library &
Museum
225 Madison Ave.
www.themorgan.org

SATURDAY 12

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**Common Ground:
Eight Philadelphia
Photographers in the
1960s and 1970s**
Philadelphia Museum of Art
26th St. and the
Benjamin Franklin Pkwy.,
Philadelphia
www.philamuseum.org

Josiah McElheny

Andrea Rosen Gallery
525 West 24th St.
www.andrearosengallery.com

EVENT

**Dan Graham in Conversation
with Glenn Branca**
7:00 p.m.
X Initiative
548 West 22nd St.
www.whitney.org

SUNDAY 13

EXHIBITION OPENINGS

**British Subjects:
Identity & Self-Fashioning
1967-2009**
Neuberger Museum of Art
Purchase College,
State University of New York
735 Anderson Hill Rd.,
Purchase
www.neuberger.org

Monet's Water Lilies

Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd St.
www.moma.org

Rite Now: Sacred and

**Secular in Video
Reinventing Ritual:
Contemporary Art and
Design for Jewish Life**
The Jewish Museum
1109 5th Ave.
www.thejewishmuseum.org

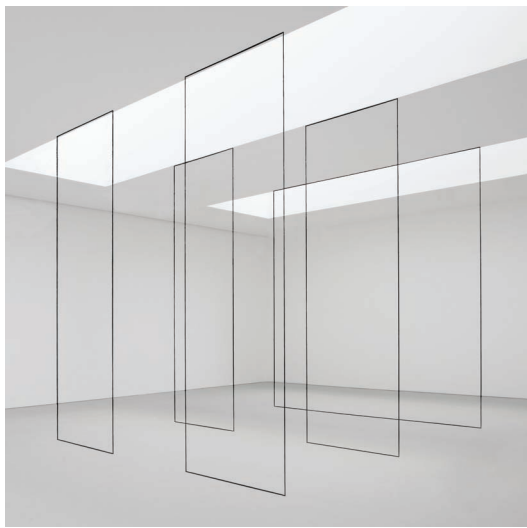


ERIC AND PETRA HESMERG

RON ARAD: NO DISCIPLINE

Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
August 2 through October 19

The title of MoMA's new retrospective *Ron Arad: No Discipline* works on multiple levels: It refers to the London-based designer's knack for roaming across disciplinary boundaries—architecture, sculpture, furniture, and industrial design—and to his contempt for art-world rules. Throughout his 25-year career, Arad has become known for bold experiments with form, wielding a wide range of media including aluminum, thermoplastics, and LEDs. MoMA's show is the first major U.S. retrospective of Arad's work, and centers around a massive steel installation designed by Arad titled *Cage Sans Frontières*: a 126-foot-long, 16-foot-high figure-eight shape, divided into hundreds of cells showcasing the artist's creations. With approximately 140 pieces, the show offers many classic works, like the seminal *Rover Chair* (1981, above) made of a car seat and steel tubing, as well as long-running explorations of a particular design concept over time, like the curvaceous forms of his series of *Big Easy* armchairs. Arad's architectural projects, such as the lobby of the Tel Aviv opera house (1994-98) and the Yohji Yamamoto showroom in Roppongi Hills, Tokyo (2003), also make an appearance via models and videos.



CATHY CARVER

6 WORKS, 6 ROOMS

David Zwirner
525 West 19th Street
Through August 14

It's a luxury for an artwork to have an entire room in a gallery to itself, and the pieces in *6 Works, 6 Rooms* at David Zwirner take full advantage of their accommodations. Per the title's promise, each of the six minimal and conceptual works by Dan Flavin, On Kawara, Sol LeWitt, John McCracken, Fred Sandback, and Richard Serra is displayed in its own room, and each engages differently with the walls around it. Flavin's 1966 *monument 4 for those who have been killed in ambush (to P.K. who reminded me about death)* does so with light, bathing its surroundings in a red glow. McCracken's mirrored-bronze pillar *Swift* (2007) displays the surrounding walls and floor, stretching toward invisibility. Serra's contribution, the 1969 *Corner Prop*, is a lead cube wedged into a corner, one of the artist's early explorations of equilibrium. And Sandback's gorgeous *Untitled (Sculptural Study, Five-part Construction)* (1987/2009, above), with lengths of black acrylic yarn, defines architectonic planes within the work's interior void.

THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER JULY 29, 2009

SHATTERING CLASSES

Engineered Transparency: The Technical, Visual, and Spatial Effects of Glass
Edited by Michael Bell and Jeannie Kim
Princeton Architectural Press, \$65.00

The facade of 7 World Trade Center by James Carpenter Design Associates.

DAVID SUNDBERG

The domination of glass as the material for architectural expression since the middle of the last century is evident in a comparison of Manhattan's skyline today with a photograph of the same before

1952. That year marks the completion of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's Lever House on Park Avenue, the first all-glass curtain wall exterior in midtown Manhattan. A number of factors coincid-

ed to displace stone by glass: advances in structural engineering and facade systems, the fabrication of ever-larger pieces of flat glass, a need for more daylight in deeper floor plates, the improved thermal

properties of glazing systems, and a desire for expressing lightness and transparency. Over 50 years later, these considerations—structure, fabrication, performance, vision, and metaphor—remain the domains for researching and evaluating glass in architecture.

Engineered Transparency, the product of a symposium of the same name at Columbia University in September 2007, a three-day event (sponsored by Oldcastle Glass with *The Architect's Newspaper*), explores these themes. A collaboration between Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (GSAPP) and the Department of Civil Engineering and Engineering Mechanics, both symposium and book are equal parts architecture and engineering, theory and practice, eye candy and data. The further involvement of the Technische Universität, Dresden's Institute of Building Construction, guarantees a balance between technical material research and what Dean Mark Wigley describes as GSAPP's "radical experimentation...as a laboratory on the future of the built environment."

The book's five main chapters—essays, projects, technical innovations (material and structural), and the visual and spatial aspects of glass—follow this architecture-engineering split, though the symposium proceedings try to overcome such a condition. The first chapter links the current exploration in glass to its historical impetus, primarily Paul Scheer's 1914

book *Glasarchitektur*, but also Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace of 1851 before it and Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky's influential essay "Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal" from 1964. Each essay mines the various qualities of glass and its effects, from its manufacture and structural properties to the material's varying degrees of transparency. What the essays make up for in diversity they lack in breadth of investigation, merely scratching the surface, as it were, of the myriad theoretical and practical issues surrounding the material. The same can be said about the projects and technical papers that follow, and this deficiency is a reflection of the symposium format and its regurgitation in book form, more than the result of individual contributions. A broad range of material is presented in the book and the companion DVD that features symposium highlights, but it is far from a complete picture. Each paper can be seen as a starting point or provocation for the reader's continued investigation elsewhere.

Preceding these chapters is a brief portfolio of the buildings of SANAA, the collaboration between Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, the former giving the symposium's keynote lecture. Their 2006 Glass Pavilion at the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio sets a benchmark for the current apotheosis and future potential of glass in architecture, an embodiment of the considerations of the last century in a decidedly 21st-century

idiom. The design minimizes structure to the extent that the floor-to-ceiling spans of frameless, laminated glass seem to hold up the roof; sophisticated mechanical balancing and daylighting systems allow this single material to predominate; and numerous curved glass corners create refractions, reflections, and layers to become, as Beatriz Colomina describes, "optical devices without any visible mechanisms... [where the viewer] is suspended in the view itself." Most uniquely, where editor Michael Bell and others point out the importance of insulated glazing units (IGUs) in facades, the Glass Pavilion expands these double layers to the scale of the building itself. Individual rooms defined by glass walls are held apart, with the inaccessible cavity space acting as a thermal buffer and becoming "the real space of the project," again in Colomina's words.

SANAA's pavilion is a perfect manifestation of the book's title phrase, the merging of the technical and the phenomenal aspects of glass. Research and engineering allow the material's exploitation in the design, while the pavilion's spatial experiences are unanticipated by the material's technical input. *Engineered Transparency* provides a decent theoretical and technical background for a contemporary understanding of glass, one that leaves few areas unexplored, if only preliminarily so.

JOHN HILL IS A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO AN.

TOTAL CITY

Actions: What You Can Do With the City
Closed April 19
Total Environment: Montréal 1965–1975
Through August 23
Canadian Centre for Architecture
1920, rue Baile, Montréal

Who makes the city? This is the question that spawned a sprawling, dense exhibition at the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA), *Actions: What You Can Do With the City*. A diverse set of actors—designers to schoolchildren, collectives to skateboarders—implement an astonishing range of creative and often subversive interventions in urban locations worldwide. Four major themes constitute the show: walking, playing, gardening, and recycling. Within these themes, 99 "actions" emerge, each identified through the actors, tools, and sites involved, including seed bombs, surveillance maps, city jumpers, squatters, and dumpster divers.

Literally intersecting this exhibition is a new show about older networks and technologies. *Total Environment: Montréal 1965–1975*, through its own emphasis on reclaiming public space and ephemeral but meaningful change, provides hints to what a larger historical context for *Actions* might look like.

The curator of *Total Environment*, Alessandra Ponte, notes that Expo 67, steeped in the ambivalent allure of new technologies and architectural forms, deeply influenced Québec artists and designers to create work that revered space travel, computers, and cybernetics. With its mix of thoughtful lighting, mesmerizing projections, films, record covers, print media, books, historically-correct beanbag chairs, and an evocative musical montage, *Total Environment* is satisfyingly immersive in itself.

Yet interestingly, the exhibition demonstrates how total environments of the time were an odd blend of aesthetic innovation and unexpectedly conservative ideas about how to "liberate"—or perhaps more accurately, influence—people. François Dallegret's *Le Drug*, a white, clinical environment that

served up pharmaceuticals and cocktails to its clientele, morphed into a Batcave-meets-Barbapapa-house in the club area of its upper stories. Maurice Demers' *Les Mondes parallèles* (1968) shows a user in a "space-age environment," seemingly captured by a trio of plastic orbs, suspended like a puppet or automaton. Fantasies of spatial and thus social mastery leak into this otherwise groovy exhibition of lighthearted and often libidinous experiments. Edmund Allyn's fascinating *Introscape* (1968–70) does not merely provide a completely immersive, sensorial environment. Within its smooth, egg-like form, its use is—or would be—divorced from social as well as sensory contact. Given that occupants would be cut off from all kinds of political and personal realities, visitors (myself included) were disappointed that we were not allowed to touch, much less enter, the pod.

In addition to a subtext of total control underpinning many of the designs and environments presented, the dead-eyed, often nude and frequently fragmented bodies of young women that populate the imagery seem too numerous to ignore, in comparison



COURTESY CCA

Maurice Demers' *Les Mondes parallèles* (1968).

Chewing the Scenery

Creating the Modern Stage: Designs for Theater and Opera
The Morgan Library & Museum
225 Madison Avenue
Through August 16

According to theater scholar Harold Child, the modern stage differs from the Elizabethan stage by the audience's perception of unfolding drama as a "moving picture in a frame." Though this definition of modern—which covers most things postmedieval—may give pause, it is frequent in academic circles. But the creation of modern drama as "pictures in a frame" is perfectly apt for the current exhibition at the Morgan Library & Museum, entitled *Creating the Modern Stage: Designs for Theater and Opera*. Putting aside the ever-moving target of the modern, the artifacts in the show are a small extraction from the more "contemporary" work found in the Oenslager collection. Donald Oenslager was a seminal figure in the world of theater arts. Beginning his career as an actor in Greenwich Village, he then studied the work of European designers, had an active career through the '60s, and taught at the Yale School of Drama from 1925 until his death in 1975. His *Scenery Then And Now* (1936) recounted the history of scenic design, leading to its recognition as a distinct profession and area of study. His near 1,600-artifact collection, donated to the Morgan

in 1982, includes scenic and costume-design drawings, photographs, musical scores, and manuscripts spanning 400 years of modern theater. Oenslager's own sketch for the stage production of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1937) is included in the show as an example of his contribution to the field as a designer.

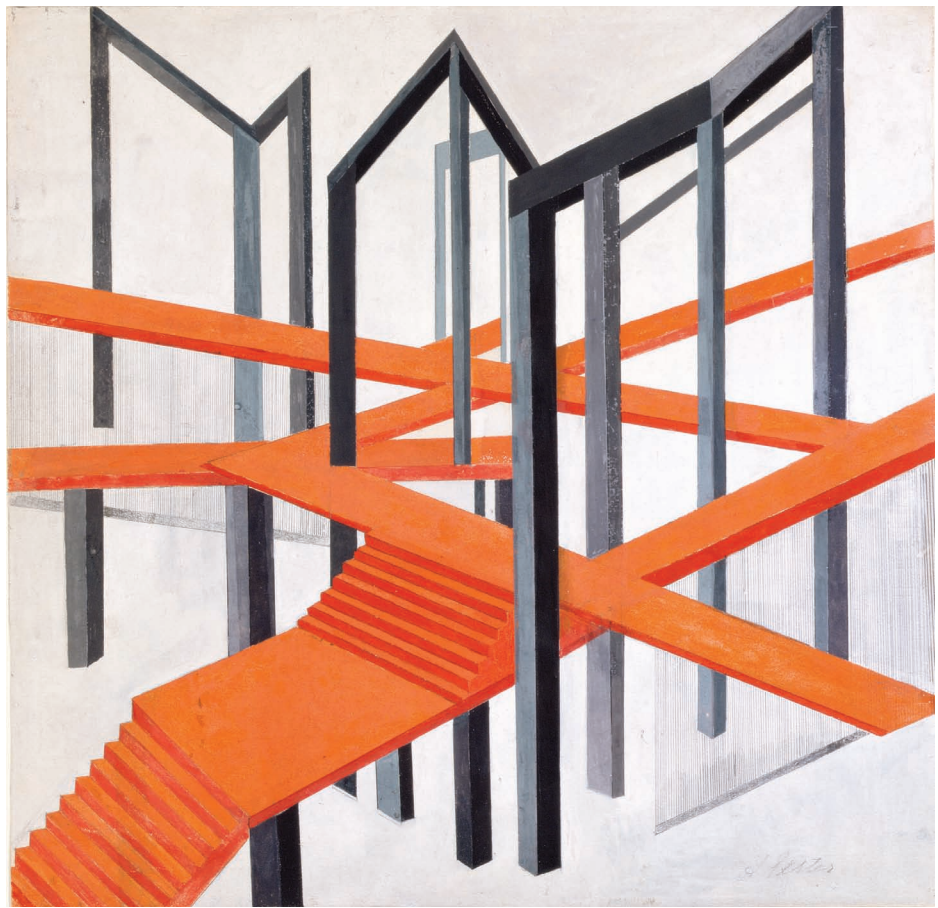
Through some 50 artifacts selected from Oenslager's vast collection, the exhibition claims to reveal influences, transformations, and tendencies in the "Modern Stage." The first section of the show, on the "Origins of Modern Scenic Theory," contains visionary gems from the 1920s by the Swiss designer Adolphe Appia, who advocated for a simplicity and unity to the whole of stage elements, and even earlier works by Edward Gordon Craig, whose geometric masses and multi-leveled sets suggested rather than literally represented the dramatic scene.

The second section of the exhibit, categorized as "Destroying Tradition," struggles to do so. On one level, these works claim technological innovation; on another, stylistic breaks from traditional realism. For instance, Karl Walser's set for *Romeo and Juliet* (1907) is as literal as can be imagined: Its innovative response to Max

Reinhardt's technologically modern revolving stage platform has no inflection on the setting we see represented. The technical wonders are discovered only through careful reading of the captions. For this and many other works, such as the scenery scroll for another Reinhardt production, the innovation remains imperceptible, the scenic sketches revealing a persistent tradition of realism contrary to the ambitions set forth by Appia and Craig's vision.

Curatorial claims aside, the show has an abundance of exquisite draftsmanship, penwork, and palette-knife applications of acrylics, rendering these drawings into evocative design communication tools and artworks in and of themselves. In the works that venture into less literal terrain, the scenic imagination makes powerful use of the total theater palette: color, textures, dramatically focused lighting, depth and layering of the "framed pictures," and the integration of actors into compositions. One fine example is Ludwig Sievert's 1922 proposal for Paul Hindemith and Oskar Kokoschka's opera *Mörder, Hoffnung der Frauen*.

The third section, on the Russian avant-garde, also reveals the alternation between realism and abstraction, between unrealizable fantasies and constructed works, between highly patterned drapery (as seen in Léon Bakst's set for Serge Diaghilev's ballet *Les Orientales*) and bold monochrome structures



COURTESY MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM

like Alexandra Exter's *Construction for a Tragedy* (1925). The inclusion of the latter, and two of her costume collages, are among the highlights of the show.

The final section, which covers the "Diversity of the American Stage," reveals not only opposing aesthetic tendencies but also the emergence of distinctly American theater forms—vaudeville and musical theater, Broadway and Hollywood. For instance, Erté's exquisite ink drawing for the Ziegfeld Follies contains the seed of all that would become Busby

Berkeley's Hollywood. An intriguing juxtaposition in this section is Jo Mielziner's Piranesi-inspired rendering *Beneath the Brooklyn Bridge* against Oliver Smith's diminutive rendition of the same setting, foreshadowing the shrunken Disney facades. The most contemporary works date from the late '60s, and thus may leave you still asking what defines the modern stage.

Beyond revealing the overwhelming breadth of possibilities and a century of cycling back and forth between abstraction and real-

Alexandra Exter, *Construction for a Tragedy* (1925).

ism, the exhibit presents a rich exploration of drawing styles and media. These are supplemented with photographic evidence of realized sets, printed matter, seminal books on theater, and a unique opportunity to listen to excerpts from various operas, connecting the conceptual sketches to the impetus and inspiration for the designs.

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with their counterparts in the biomorphic pods that are the real stars of the exhibition. A 1970 *Esquire* article for Marco Lepage's *Metafunic Dryer* (1970) excitedly proclaims, "the womb and the breast, water and air: an aesthetic return to elemental environments, in which to be is to become, to create is to be created!" The *Dryer* was comprised of two enormous, breast-shaped towels that filled with warm air upon activation. A freshly showered user would stand between these forms and be jiggled, wobbled, and "stimulated" until dry. Was the brave new world that these artists and designers were negotiating really that of mass communication, perception-altering drugs, and hitherto unimaginable kinetics? Or was the swiftly changing social world, in which women were for the first time in history gaining political and legal control of "the womb and the breast" the real focus?

In contrast, *Actions*, curated by Mirko Zardini and Giovanna Borasi, though it seems at first glance to continue the love affair with nubile inflatables, is something else. The enormous, bubble-gum pink "Puffs" at the entrance to the large exhibition space turn

out to be the perfect segue between the theme of the total environment and the topic of the mutable city. The three Puffs (designed by German design team Topotek 1) are portable alternatives to fixed playgrounds, and an apt metaphor for the playful contents of the exhibition as a whole. At turns whimsical, practical, subversive, but also disturbing, *Actions* presents the city not as a total but as a *totalizing* environment, prime for subversion from below. The show thus moves in a completely different direction from the experiments shown in the previous exhibit, using a similar proliferation of media to get its message across. Witty and engaging titles, reading cheekily like sensational headlines—"Plastic Bag Feeds Neighbourhood," "Ivy Invades London," and "Sheep and Lambs Eat City Parks"—help to mitigate the overwhelming quantity of material.

The projects that make the connection between design, community, and site have the most power. Through *Recetas Urbanas*, or "urban prescriptions," architect Santiago Cirugeda in Spain uses the gaps between laws to create public parks and other spatial amenities in the built environment. With the

help of students, volunteers, professional designers, and unwitting public servants, the collective builds balconies, creates street furniture, even constructs entire buildings out of discarded or banal objects (skips, palettes, freestanding closets) in the interstices of urban space. In *Fake Horses Plan Real Park* (2003–04) and *Birds Research Local History* (2005–06), London-based muf art/architecture underscores the theme that is truly the engine behind the entire exhibition, showing how humans, animals, and urban spaces are inextricably bound together. Using simple costumes based on indigenous birds or the history of pony riding in a given area, muf works with residents (often children) to develop their knowledge about the interrelationships in a given place.

If the exhibition loses something in its formulaic approach to diverse activities (sinister, anti-democratic spatial practices such as the "fortress" that kept protesters away from the 2001 G8 summit in Genoa are presented in the same fashion as Steve Brill's series of "playing cards" that identify edible plants in Central Park), it certainly gains in terms of its abundance of simple solutions to pressing

problems like shelter and food. If you can grow a garden in a plastic bag, or find dinner in a dumpster, then there is respite from fantasies of total control, which here are undone by simple but potent ideas and tactics.

Actions carries the torch of a number of recent exhibitions at the CCA, all of which have attempted to move away from the paradigm of the lone architectural genius and conventional periodization into a broader terrain of urban experience and architectural agency. In many ways, *Actions* is a delightful triumph, directly challenging Walter Benjamin's famous assertion that while people look at art with absorption, they only experience architecture in a "distracted" mode. In this exhibition, there is no distraction: In the wake of the desire for a totalizing vision of urban space, we have (almost) the panacea of "action" to take its place. A different kind of total space emerges: one in which plants, animals, and people don't simply matter; indeed, it is they who make the city, together.

CYNTHIA IMOGEN HAMMOND IS A PROFESSOR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY AT CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY.

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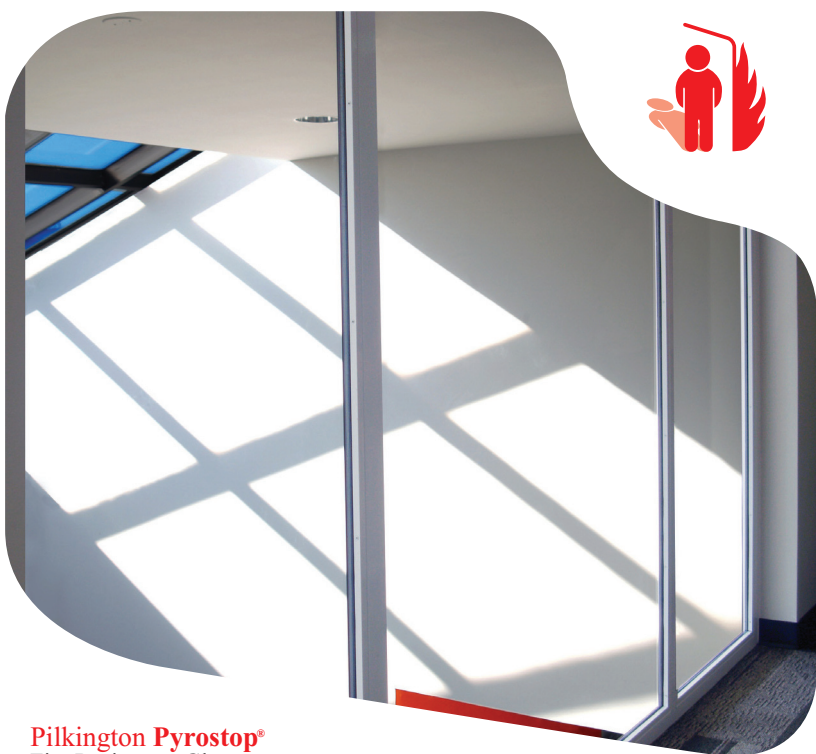
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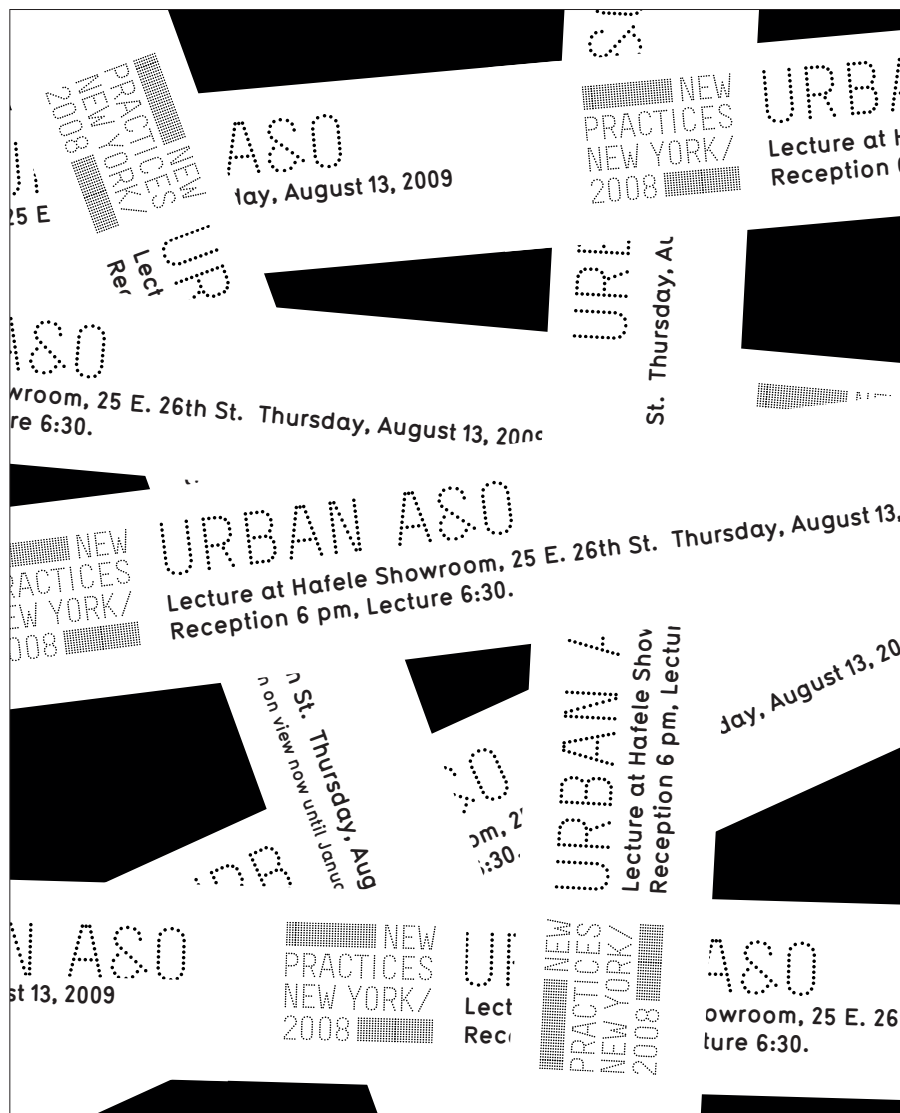
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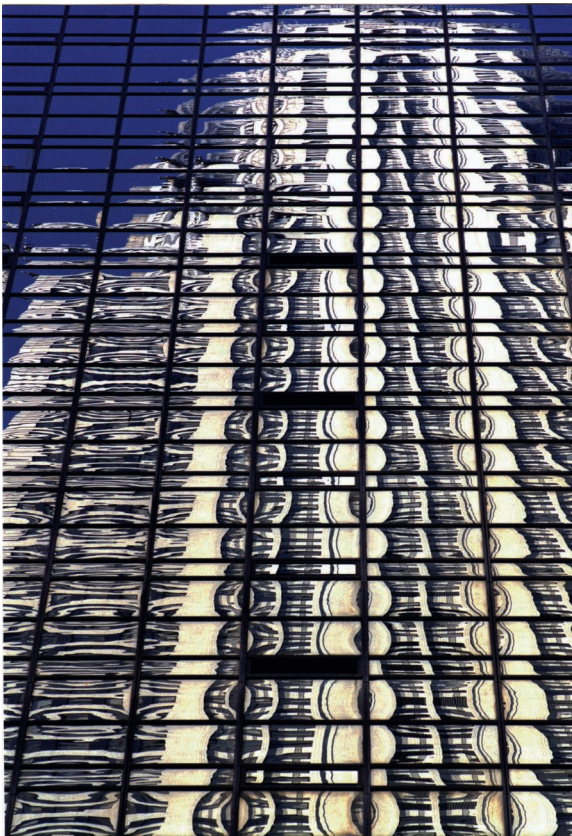
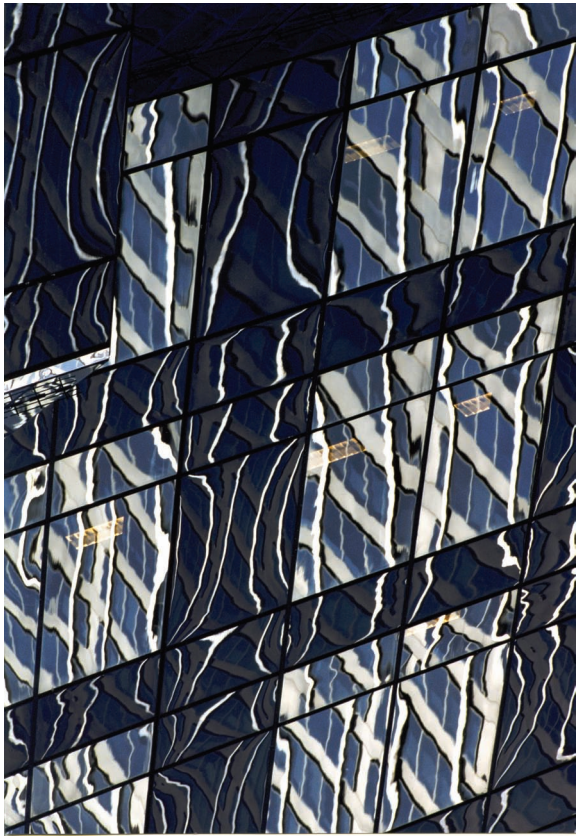
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LIQUID ARCHITECTURE

Noted urban photographer Judith Turner won recognition in the late 1970s for her concentrated, abstract images of large-scale buildings, often still under construction. In 1980, John Hejduk wrote in an introduction to the book *Judith Turner Photographs Five Architects* (Rizzoli) that “her art has to do with fixed silences upon abstracted thoughts. She searches for an unforgettable moment, like it or not, and she reveals sparsities and densities—the basic substance of architecture.”

Often exhibited, her work is included in the photography collections at the J. Paul

Getty Museum, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the International Center of Photography. In 2000, Turner began taking her Pentax 645 to Times Square in order to capture the molten reflections of glass on glass in both old and new construction there. The six photographs reprinted here, all from full negatives without digital manipulation, are portraits, as Hejduk might say, of “the basic substance of architecture” at its most illusive as well as evocative.

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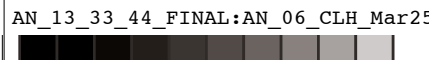
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